

Crossroads

Spring 2006

The Magazine

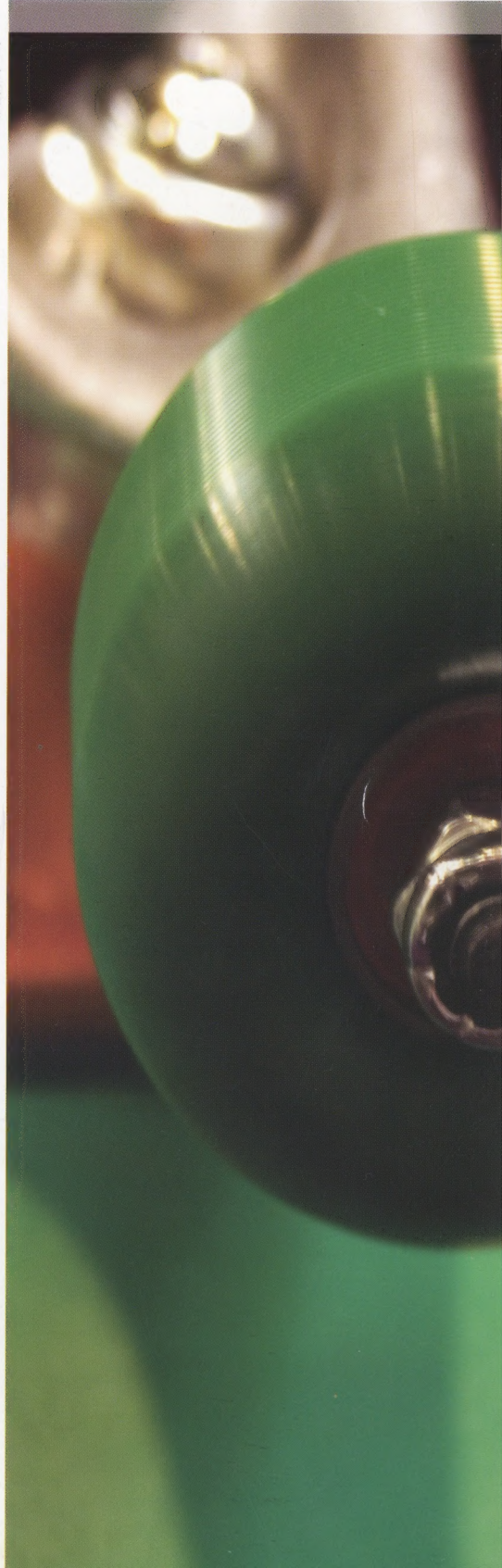


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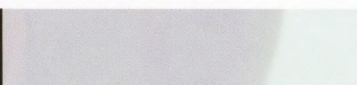




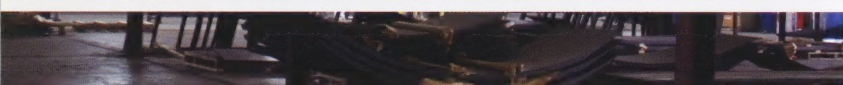





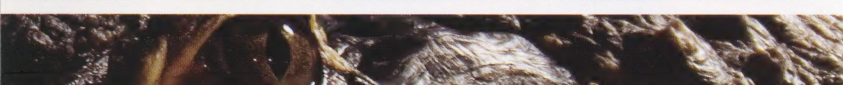
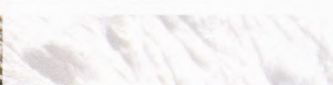
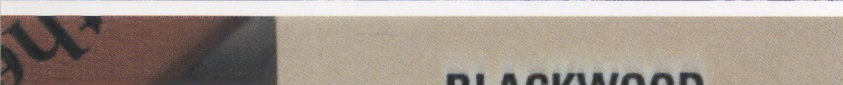
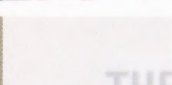


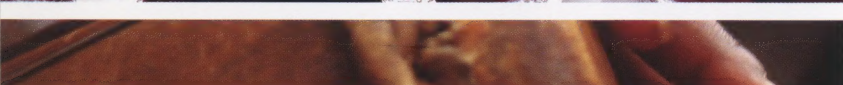
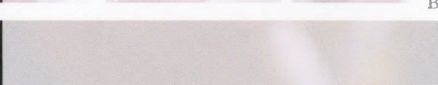

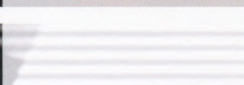
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Photo by Kristin Wilfing

Editor's Letter:

Dear Reader,

Past experiences, beliefs, interests and ideas all come together to make us who we are. Although people might look alike, and some swear we all have a twin somewhere in the world, the fact remains that we are all individuals, not because of external appearances, but instead it is what cannot be seen that makes us who we are.

In this issue you will find unique stories of perseverance, as in the tale of a four-year-old boy and his family's struggle to find a cure for an undiagnosed illness; stories of deeply held convictions and beliefs, as in a story about various religions on campus; and stories that might frighten you as you read them, such as *Ghostly Encounters* and *Pursuit of the Unknown*. Other stories in this issue also point to what makes people distinctive and therefore, irreplaceable. Flip through the magazine and you will find a couple who cherish a love for reptiles and an author who has written in numerous genres. You'll even find a range of companies featured, from chocolate to skateboarding to a ministry that enables people to feed their families.

As you read, I hope you'll take the time to appreciate the differences that God has made us with, and in doing so, will appreciate yourself a little bit more. Have a wonderful day and celebrate the variety found in humanity!

Noelle L. Ott

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Story by Nate Billings
Photos by Kristin Wilfing

Coffee

Local coffee houses provide atmosphere and more to Joplin

Over the past few years, several coffeehouses have opened in Joplin.

These shops can be found on most any street, but a handful of them stand out with a larger space and some unique features.

Dioko Coffee Co.

Dioko Coffee Co. has been serving its own brew for the past four years. It is located in the hub of 500 South Main St. alongside several historic Joplin buildings.

"It's really accessible," said Jason Strother, barista. "It's especially to OCC and Missouri Southern students."

Strother said he has worked in coffee shops for the past seven years, but for the

Internet services, checker boards and live music.

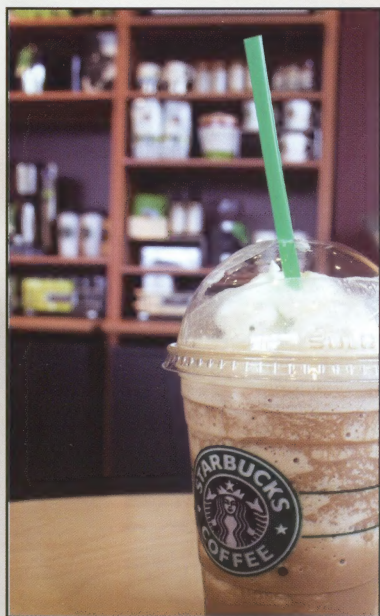
"We are the only local coffee house that brings in music and art," Strother said. "We allow for a lot of stuff to come in here."

Rooms are available in the back of the building for group events and everyone is welcome to see the music.

Thursdays and Fridays are the evenings when bands or performers come in and play. There is also the possibility an open mic night will be implemented again on Saturdays.

Strother said the small business feel is also something which allows Dioko's to

is served



Starbucks is one of many establishments in Joplin that cater to the coffee culture.

last two, he has been working at Dioko. He said the shop brings a different atmosphere and feeling to the Joplin area.

"Definitely, as far as that goes, we have real baristas," he said. "Other's use automatic machines. Here, we pull our own shots. It's the people that work here; they make Dioko."

Dioko's menu includes not only coffee, but salads, soups and sandwiches. There are cold and other hot drinks as well. These come in short, tall, grande and venti.

The sandwiches include BLTs, chicken salad sandwiches and a couple of grilled sandwiches. However, there are other things which Strother said stand out about the shop itself.

"I would say it's a very chill atmosphere," he said. "We have low lights and it's very comfortable."

The building offers free wireless

be closer to the area.

"We use a local roaster," Strother said. "We get fresh beans every week. Our beans are never more than a week old."

Dioko will be open from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Wednesday, 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. Thursdays, 6 a.m. to midnight Fridays and 9 a.m. to midnight Saturdays.

Joe Muggs

Another brew of interest comes from Joe Muggs, located inside of Books-a-Million.

"For one, we have the bookstore," said Dustin Emmett, assistant general manager. "You can come in and read and relax."

Emmett said while the bookstore sets the coffee shop apart from other shops in the area, it also has other items of interest.

"We have more of a personal atmosphere," he said.

The shop has several tables and even an

"Sleep is a symptom of caffeine deprivation."

-Unknown

outside patio. Customers are allowed to bring books by and read them or drink coffee while they shop through the store.

"It prompts people to stay longer," Emmett said. "We know a lot of the customers. The baristas like to talk to the customers."

Emmett said people are often not aware of the varieties of each selection available to eat and drink. These selections include teas, smoothies and make-your-own coffees.

Joe Muggs also accepts the discount card available from Books-a-Million. Customers receive a 10 percent discount on their purchases with the card.

Also, if a customer is a Books-a-Million club member, he or she will receive coupons weekly in an e-mail.

Emmett said the shop has been open for eight years, which has allowed it to grow into the community.

"In my opinion, it's the most enjoyable atmosphere in town," he said.

He said customers should also look out for the CDs available beside the cash register which include pieces played over the speakers in the store.

Starbucks

One of the newest coffeehouses in town is located near the new construction across from the Kohl's shopping center.

Starbucks Coffee Company has been in Joplin since June 2005.

"We've been warmly received by the community and we are proud to have the opportunity to open a location in your area," said Keith Stewart, regional marketing manager. "Starbucks doesn't operate with market criteria when opening our sites."

Stewart said the sites were chosen based on distribution limitations, but because of the national growth, Starbucks was able to open a coffeehouse in the Joplin area without worrying about other areas.

The coffeehouse, like Joe Muggs, offers an outside patio for customers, but the

inside is prepared for small groups.

"Starbucks stores are also a gathering place where people come together to connect over coffee," Stewart said.

The company, though owned by a larger corporation, brings its own touch to the local community.

"Additionally, Starbucks invests in the local community - it's an important part of the Starbucks culture," Stewart said.

"Through local programming, in-kind donations, encouraging partner volunteerism, corporate cash contributions and the Starbucks Foundation, the local Starbucks partners will invest in the Joplin area."

Stewart said, though these items may not set Starbucks aside from other coffeehouses in town, they provide an important part of the Starbucks's theme.

The coffeehouse offers several different beverages and not just coffee. Juices, milk and smoothies are also part of the menu.

If a person has a favorite mix of flavors for a coffee, then Starbucks baristas will make the drinks by hand.

"In fact, with more than 55,000 ways to customize your own beverage everyone can come in and create their own favorite," Stewart said.

He said the coffeehouses in Joplin are not necessarily in competition with Starbucks.

"Starbucks provides just one choice for the Joplin community and we do not believe that our success comes at the failure of other coffeehouses," Stewart said.

Others agreed with Stewart.

Emmett said Joe Muggs has a loyal customer base and he sees the availability of other shops as a good thing, but noted each shop has its own unique style.

Strother said Dioko also has a good customer base with larger lunch and breakfast crowds.

Strother, Stewart and Emmett agreed with one thing. They said they are willing to do their best for the customer.

"As long as our drinks are good, we keep our end of the bargain," Emmett said. ☺



Vanilla, cinnamon, chocolate and nutmeg are just a few of the flavorings available to personalize one's coffee experience.



Ulla Sørensen Johansson of Sweden and Chris Cooper, senior art major, take time to enjoy a hot cup of Java and each others company.



alternative EDUCATION

By Faith Ducommun

Home education teaches more than the basics

Who are they? They are sitting in classrooms all over campus at Missouri Southern and across the United States. They are the students who didn't attend public school in our country. They are students who were home educated.

These students were not affected by the politics, social pressure and sometimes boredom public schools entail. Without even thinking, many people have stereo-

typed the students who were home educated. Home educated students seem to wear the stigma of pocket protectors, disliking the sun and not being capable of holding an intelligible conversation with another human being. However, as with most stereotypes, this is not entirely true.

Sterling Moss, the youngest of four children, is a junior physics major at Southern and president of Koinonia Campus Ministry. Moss says he sees home-

schooling as "the superior education."

"Most, if not all, of my positive attributes have been because of my education," Moss said.

He also said it was the best thing his parents could have done for him. His parents tried sending his older siblings to a private Christian school, but when success was fleeing, decided to home educate.

"The great thing about home-schooling is that your parents can spend more time

with you," Moss said.

Moss was also taken by the sacrifice his parents made when they decided to home educate him and his siblings. His mother played the biggest role in his education, while his father worked and took care of the farm where he and his family lived. Moss loved the flexibility home-schooling offered, as well as the interconnection between all the families who were home-schooling.

"Life experiences play a big part," Moss said. "I wouldn't have had those experiences if I was stuck in a class room all day."

He thought the most memorable thing about home-schooling was spending time with family and having a close relationship with his parents. He told an experience about his siblings who, during the nice weather, would try to finish school early so they could go out and play on the farm.

He appreciates the independence and self-discipline home education offers. However, the sacrifice parents make is considerable; giving up their own lives for the betterment of their children's education.

"There were financial sacrifices that my parents made and sacrifices of time, energy and effort," Moss said.

Moss was involved in the Eastview home-school organization. This gave the families accountability and friendship.

Because of the expense of educational resources. This organization also helped with sharing textbooks and school materials.

Rebecca Dodson, sophomore nursing applicant, was recently accepted into the nursing program at Southern and is the oldest of five children. Her experience of home education was slightly different from Moss's. However, she loved the decision her parents made, saying that it too created her personality. However, Dodson's birth order gave her a different perspective.

"When school was done for me I would then help my brother with math or my sister with another subject," Dodson said.

Dodson's family was also involved in a networking of other home-school families and involved in sports and community activities. She remembers when the families would get together for barbecues and the friendships that were made because of the common bond. Dodson also enjoyed the time spent with family.

"It was good spending time together, making lunches and having fun," Dodson said.

Dodson also said her parents put a lot of emphasis on reading when they were younger and she believes it helps her with her education today.

However, both Moss and Dodson had to overcome the stigma that was attached to home educated students. They agreed

that many people don't even realize they didn't go to public school.

"There are people who are home educated because they are weird, and on a smaller scale there are people who are weird because they were home educated," Moss said.

He said there are a small percentage of home-schooled students that lack social inhibitions, and one will find that same percentage in a public school. Dodson agreed.

"When you're in a public school setting you learn the bad habits of your peers," Dodson said. "You're under constant social attack because maybe you're not wearing the best clothes or shoes and it's completely unnecessary."

When a child is learning at home, the parent can tailor to the student's learning style.

"A great aspect of home schooling is the tailor[ing] to your learning style," Moss said. "My mother had four children and four different learning styles."

They both agreed that the public school system often times exhausts the student and, therefore, they become burnt out much quicker. However, they see that with home education a person can set their own pace with homework. At Southern, both Moss and Dodson discussed their earlier education and how it helps or hinders them at the university level.

"A lot of home-schoolers build a work



Nikkie Phillips and her son Mason, another home-schooler, spend time together while working on the days school lesson.

Photo by Kristin Wilfong

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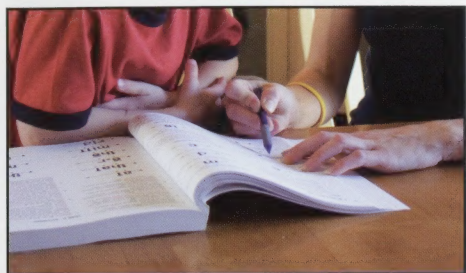


Photo by Kristin Wilfong

Nikkie's helping hands guide her son, Mason, through his schoolwork.

your studies completed and being accountable," Dodson said.

Moss told a story about one of his classes and how the teacher specifically asked if there were any home-schooled kids in the class and he was the only one to raise his hand. The teacher said she thought that he was one and told the rest of the kids that she knew the difference because they [graduates of public school] are all conditioned to be bored. He thought that was very honest. However, he sees more benefits to his home education.

"When I came to college I could talk to a six year old, a sixteen year old and sixty year old," Moss said.

He also said he was able to communicate with all types of people because he was exposed to adults a lot while growing up and learned to respect elders while still being able to communicate with those of his own age. Dodson agreed.

"Home-schooling gives you an opportunity to be around all types of people of all

ages, and you learn to interact with all of them," Dodson said.

Learning style is another aspect of education and is different for all people. Dodson said she doesn't like coming to classes, and she'd rather do her work at home in her pajamas. Many home educated students, like Moss and Dodson, did their homework either in their room, or in a lazy boy, whichever they felt to be more comfortable.

Both feel that the sacrifice made by the parents is tremendous and if for some reason a parent cannot teach a specific discipline, there are methods available for the student to still be educated.

First of all, in the state of Missouri, all students who are being home educated must be allowed to use the public school facilities because these families pay taxes to the school district. The students can either take a class, use the gym or library and even be allowed to play on sports teams, if so desired.

This avenue, however, is becoming increasingly difficult due to some school administrations and also for other various reasons. Plus, permission to use the facilities is not easy to obtain. There are other methods of getting a well-rounded education. When a family is connected with a home-school organization, there are other benefits as well. For example, there

might be a parent who can speak a specific language. They will then post flyers about certain classes and have a full class of home-school children wanting to learn the language. Dodson's younger siblings are now taking upper division classes through this alternative. They were previously being educated through satellite classes, which was a more expensive method.

Through their different educational perspectives, Moss and Dodson have learned to use their educational strengths and weaknesses to their advantage at Southern. They are both adamant that home education is the best option.

Dr. Jay Moorman, head of the communication department at Southern, commented on his experience with home educated students in his classroom.

"Home-school students have an exceptionally higher education than those students who have gone through the system," Moorman said. "However, they are lacking the public speaking skills."

As people get to know those who are home educated, then perhaps the stigmas will fall as these students prove to themselves, and to others, that home education is just as good as, if not better, than public education. ■



CHICAGO

NEW YORK

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New investment center is one of only 30 in the nation

As of February 4, a new feature has joined Missouri Southern's list of achievements; the Edward Jones Investment Center.

"This is a technologically enhanced classroom," said Brian Nichols, assistant professor of business administration.

This new computer laboratory, located on the second floor of Matthews Hall, is equipped with real-time investment information from Bloomberg and Ibbotson databases on equity, foreign exchange, fixed income and derivative markets.

"This investment center will provide a tremendous benefit for our students," said Julio León, University President.

The center was created in a year and a half with little hesitation. The only occurring problems were the raising of the funds for the equipment and construction work.

The laboratory contains: 32 computers with workstations and desks, two 46-inch LCD televisions with constant live marketing information, a Bloomberg dual-monitor computer workstation, a separate conference table and individual air-conditioning units.

Students will now have the ability to have hands-on experience in financial markets, risk management, security analysis and individually constructing their own portfolio.

"This center will provide a tremendous opportunity to work with this type of environment," said Rod Surber, director of public information. "It will expose students to the job market, which is



Brian Nichols, assistant professor of business administration and an alumni of Southern, was recruited to maintain the investment center.

what it's all about."

Another opportunity for students is the two new portfolio classes, in which students will directly manage \$300,000. These funds are made possible by the grant given from the Missouri Southern Foundation.

"This opportunity takes a full year in order to develop the skills," Nichols said.

In these classes, students will examine the economy, industries and companies in order to choose smart investments. Over time, the students will put together a portfolio, with the objective to surpass the market on an evaluated level.

To be involved in these classes, students must go through an application and interview process with an advisory board. These professors will stand-in as clients when the management practice begins.

This modern facility has pleased many in the business department.

"This is very convenient, current and well maintained," said Dr. Jim Gray, professor of management, "and it's now one of the largest computer labs on campus."

The center needed to be organized and maintained by someone, so León and Dr. Brad Kleindl, the dean of business, chose Nichols for the position.

Nichols graduated from Southern in 1993 as an Outstanding Graduate with three majors: Finance Economics, Accounting and Management.

"Dr. León had wanted this for a while, and Dr. Kleindl asked me to put it together," Nichols said.

In two to four upper division classes offered this semester, taught by Nichols, there are 10 to 20 students. This small size enhances Nichols' favorite part of his career.

"Working with the students, watching them grow, mature and become successful is the best part of my job," Nichols said.

Nichols' influence does not just affect students, but the other faculty members as well.

"We're very proud of him," Gray said. "He's one of ours."

Nichols said the best thing students can do while in school is to become involved with as many extracurricular activities, such as this one, as possible.

"It will expose you to many career opportunities, and make you more able and rewarded in the job market," Nichols said.

The finance and economics departments originally desired this center to be a trading room, but a "charitable" donation by

EDWARD JONES

Story by Rebecca Watts
Photos by Kristin Wilfing

the Edward Jones Association made the plan a reality.

The Edward Jones Company has 950 branches in the United States, and 12 of them are located in Joplin. There are also more than 400 in Canada and about 150 in the United Kingdom.

The firm held their monthly, regional meeting at 1 p.m., March 17 in Matthews Hall. There were more than 50 representatives attending the meeting from southwest Missouri and northwest Arkansas, which is considered Region 39.

At 2 p.m., after the meeting, the new investment center was dedicated to Jim Goodknight, a 1963 graduate of Joplin Junior College, the ancestor of Missouri Southern. Currently, there are about 14 Southern graduates with the firm.

"We had more people than we had room for chairs," Nichols said.

Some representatives of the firm had traveled to Joplin just to honor Goodknight: some as far as the Edward Jones headquarters located in St. Louis.

"He's a real legend with the firm," said Robert Baker, a Fayetteville broker. "He's someone we all aspire to be like."

The dedication ceremony began with León welcoming the Edward Jones family.

"This is a great day for Southern," León said, "all of this [the center] was made possible by the regional representatives of Edward Jones."

León then introduced Doug Hill, a senior member of the Edward Jones Company.

"This is absolutely wonderful," Hill

said. "We know the value of education, and we hope this center will give quality education to the students here."

Hill then spoke of Goodknight's background with Southern and his beginning career with the Edward Jones Corporation. He explained how Goodknight had too many clients, and didn't "feel he had enough time for them."

"He always believed in what's right for the customer," Hill said.

Goodknight shared his clients with another associate and improved the quality of work, for both him and the customers. This process of recruitment was soon to be called the "Goodknight Plan." There are now 312 plans in progress for the company.

"Goodknight is a role model for the investment planners," Hill said. "He's an outstanding representative, and an incredible human being."

After Hill's speech, León introduced Goodknight. All of the people attending the ceremony, with chairs, gave Goodknight a standing ovation.

Goodknight thanked León for his leadership and explained what a "great honor" it was to represent the Edward Jones Company.

Goodknight's gratitude for where he is today went to the first economics class he attended at what is today Southern. Goodknight hopes this

center will be a "bridge to the community" and bring new recruits to the Edward Jones Company, as well as provide a solid based knowledge to the Southern students.

"This investment center should be used by the students to learn free enterprise," Goodknight said. "In order for wealth, there must be earnings."

To make the dedication complete, two plaques were presented to Goodknight in front of the center. Then, with all attending Southern graduates behind him, Goodknight cut the red ribbon.

"This is such a wonderful tribute to Jim Goodknight," said Dr. Elizabeth Deffenbaugh, Board of Governors president.

"Goodknight is a pebble in a pond. His actions created ripples that had great effects, and not just in business," Kleindl said. "This center is like a pebble in Southern's pond, which will have great effects on students for years to come."

To know more, please visit the link on the MSSU Web site; or to find information on the upper division classes next semester please contact Nichols at 625-9599.



Jim Goodknight received two plaques before cutting the ribbon with other Southern graduates.

Warning!!
Skate within your ab
Injury or death may
from improper use.
safety gear, follow tr
pedestrian safety ru

Carbon Star



Story by Nate Billings
Photos by Kristin Wilfing

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Couple rolls into expansion

Opening a clothing store right after marriage is sometimes difficult. But that didn't stop one local couple.

Michael Patrick and his wife, Desiree Peterson-Patrick, senior graphic arts major, opened Carbon Star in early 2000.

The store originally started out as a clothing store in Neosho. The focus was on closeout items with a small skateboard section in the back.

Michael said the first years were rough, but the store made it through.

"We were either blessed or lucky," he said.

The store was slowly changing its layout.

"Generally, our growth is built with the kids,"

Michael said. "They tell us what they want and we do what we can in our power to get it."

"We just listened to our customers," Desiree said. "That's just good business."

Soon, Carbon Star had become a skateboarder's hangout and the store converted to focusing on the skateboard scene.

The store then moved into the Northpark Mall.

"This incarnation of the store opened in 2004," Desiree said.

"We weren't sure what to expect."

Desiree designed the store's logo, a gas mask, and the store's nameplate.

She said the gas mask represents protection and good. It is something

which, she said, doesn't go over the edge.

"There's a bad name associated with skating," Desiree said. "We really try to keep the product we carry on edge, but don't cross it."

The store carries anything skateboard-related from T-shirts to skate trucks, decks, wheels and axles. Desiree and Michael said they like to keep the store within a realm they are comfortable with, allowing them to remain with their values and please the customers as well.

"We try to make it a family environment," Desiree said.

The skate atmosphere is also one Michael and Desiree are familiar with.

They, in fact, met because of skating.

Michael was only 14 when he met Desiree. He had seen her at different school events and occasionally in the hallway.

Michael had moved from St. Louis to Anderson, where skateboarding was relatively unknown.

Desiree was also into skateboarding.

"I saw her in the hall one day," Michael said. "She was the height to be held."

The two met up officially through friends and, though they had their time away, they got married and now have two children.

Michael, who is working on a degree in business at Crowder College, said Desiree is the secret to the store's success.

"She's a pretty wise person," he said.

"She's a genius. She's the Jay and I'm the Silent Bob."

They both said the beginning of the store was hard. They were in debt and both disliked the jobs they were working at the time.

However, they said their love of skate-



Resurfacing boards is one of the many services Michael Patrick offers at Carbon Star.

boarding and their work with the area has kept them going. They also said the skateboarding scene in Joplin is growing.

"It's definitely growing, thriving," Michael said. "It's kind of an awakening with the local city council too."

The store advocates the building of free skate parks in area towns.

"Any town or small community which is trying to open a skate park, we'll do all we can to help open the park," Desiree said.

She said a good example of a community coming together to create a skate park is Neosho.

The Neosho skaters held bake sales, bean feeds and other fund-raisers to bring in enough money to build the park south of town.

"The future looks bright," Desiree said.

The history of skating in Joplin is intertwined with the history of one of Carbon Star's employees.

Tom Walters, assistant manager, has been skating in Joplin for more than a decade. When he was a teen-ager, he started his own skate park after a few disappointments from the ones available in town. After years of working with skateboards and doing tricks, he met Desiree and Michael.

The three developed the Carbon Star Skate Team, which travels to area schools, local venues and even nationwide to perform.

"We kind of upped the ante on it," Walters said.

Walters is traveling with another team as well. He has been sponsored by the Destructo skate truck company as part of his work.

He said Joplin needed a new venue for skaters in the area and he believes Carbon Star is the place for them.

"A lot of people are like, 'There's a skate shop in the mall,'" Walters said.

He said the skateboarders find their way

to the shop because it is there and always available. He also said the skateboarders have a culture to them.

"To me, skateboarding is a way of life," he said. "Skateboarding is freedom. When you're trying to do a certain trick and you finally get it, there's nothing like it in the world."

Walters said he felt the personal touch of the store also helped the skateboarding culture grow in Joplin.

Carbon Star holds an annual blood drive in the spring and also helps to promote different events across the area.

Soon, the store will be expanding its merchandise base with more skate shoe brands and different decks.

Michael said they will be looking into BMX bicycles and perhaps expanding that area of their shop.

In Fayetteville, Arkansas, Michael and Desiree are planning on opening a new store that will feature more floor space and a larger selection of skating products.

"We looked into the Meadowbrook Mall, the Frisco Station Mall, and the Fayetteville market is the most ready," Desiree said.

Carbon Star offers a buy-10-decks-get-one-free deal for customers as they buy products. When a person buys his or her 11th deck, then that deck is free. The numbers are kept in a customer profile which is started with the first deck.

"It helps us understand the customer more too," Michael said.

Custom-built boards are 10 percent off and assembly is free.

"There's nothing better than a custom complete," Desiree said. "I think like the customer when I come in here. We will meet or beat the competition's price."

The store is located at the old front entrance to the Northpark Mall and is open during general Mall hours everyday except Sunday. "I



Tom Walters, assistant manager, travels with two teams nationwide to perform his skating techniques.

Parishables

Story by Faith Ducommun
Photos by Kristin Wilfing



Angle Food distributes food to those in need

The people were waiting anxiously outside the doors of the century old church. It was that time of the month again, and Faith Fellowship Church had transformed its basement to accommodate more than a thousand people that would walk through its doors because of Angel Food Ministries.

Angel Food Ministries is a nationally known non-profit organization designed for food distribution across the United States. It was founded by Pastor Joe Wingo who, with help from his wife, has created a ministry unlike any other.

Angel Food, unlike common food pantries, is distributed by semi truck to locations, whether it is at churches, organizations or community buildings. And for the cost of \$25, a person can buy a large box of food intended to feed a family of four persons for one month.

There are also specialty items that can be ordered at a minimal additional cost. These specialty items can range from steaks, chicken or a seasonal scarcity depending on the time of year.

There are no restrictions or eligibility requirements that need to be met before purchasing from Angel Food. One thing that sets the ministry apart is that all people from the young to the old and from all socioeconomic statuses can participate.

Loretta Baker, a resident of Southwest City, Oklahoma, is a new user of Angel Food Ministries with this month being her second, but she loves it. She is an active member of her church where the food is distributed.

"It's great," Baker said. "You would probably pay double in the regular store for what you can get with Angel Food."

Baker said she is glad her church is able to be a part of this ministry.

The administration of Angel Food, although a large ministry, is considerably smaller than one would first



Angel Food Ministry has three distribution points in Joplin, as well as, many across the nation.

think. Located in Georgia, the ministers who helped found the organization work to make a difference in the lives of others and making sure the food is distributed from the main warehouse smoothly.

In Joplin, the largest distribution center for Angel Food is Faith Fellowship Church, providing for more than 1,000 families a month in the four-state area. The people of this church understand the importance of this outreach and everyone lends a helping hand for this growing ministry.

Chad Hensley is the youth minister

at Faith Fellowship. He and his father, the senior pastor, have taken the responsibility of starting and organizing the Angel Food distribution each month.

At the headquarters of Angel Food Ministries, a video and booklet is given to people who want to begin local distribution.

"Every church or organization is different and each place is going to make the ministry their own and mold it to fit the community," Hensley said.

The church started the ministry only 10 months ago and since then has grown significantly in size.

"This is an avenue into their lives, we do much more than feed their bodies, we are planting a seed," Hensley said.

Faith Fellowship averages 80,000 pounds of food each month to be given away to the many families who depend on this ministry to feed their family. Hensley knows that it's not their doing, but God's.

"If God's involved in a program, God can do whatever He wants," Hensley said. "He can make the food last. We have had people tell us that they couldn't feed



their families before they did Angel Food ministries, but now food is abundant because of God's blessing."

Faith Fellowship realizes the commitment and work that goes into making Angel Food successful. The workers put heavy emphasis on building relationships with the people.

"It's not about us," he said. "It's about the people that are walking through those doors."

The families that come on the Saturday of distribution sometimes bring friends and children to have fellowship in the small basement of the church. The week before the distribution day, a call is made to all of those who placed an order to remind them of the food pick up at the church.

This is due to the size of the orders. The church is not able to hold the box of food for those who don't pick it up on the designated day.

If the food is not picked up, then they will donate it to a needy family in the community.

Hensley shared stories that have touched him during his involvement with Angel Food ministries. Many of these stories have also made an impact in their congregation.

"We believe that God's people should be nice, gentle and kind, but surprisingly people will come into our office and weep because of our kindness," Hensley said. "It breaks my heart, because so many people are scorned from the past but we can make a difference."

Hensley, however, feels that it has been the church that has been blessed.

"This has been a tremendous blessing for our church,



Faith Fellowship, an Angel Food distribution point, is located at 1601 Wall Street in Joplin.

top to bottom," he said.

He thought this ministry brought the church together and the people that came to participate in Angel Food can feel welcome in the small church.

"Even our neighbors who don't attend this church always come and help on the Saturdays of distribution," Hensley said.

Hensley said he felt that God was involved and God was answering prayers. Hensley was thankful for the difference being made in the community and for the many thousands who are involved with the ministry.

The Independent Living Center (ILC) is another distribution center in Joplin located on 32nd Street. This center specializes in helping those with disabilities to continue to live in the community.

The ILC started this ministry in Septem-

ber 2005 and since then the orders have progressively increased. Currently, the ILC has anywhere from 230-300 orders being fulfilled. Susan Flowers, on staff at ILC, helped start the Angel Food ministry at this location.

"It is wonderful to help people provide food at a reasonable cost," Flowers said. "Many of our consumers are in difficult times and have to choose between their medicine, food or putting gas in their cars."

The other staff members feel like they are doing something worthwhile and are making a difference in the community. Last month, the ILC tried something different since there was a delay in the trucks. They did a drive-thru delivery to receive the food and Flowers said it was a huge success.

"Many of the people are not able to get out and stand in a long line in the cold," she said. "This was very convenient for them."

Flowers and other volunteers that participate in Angel Food ministry are excited about the future and hope the progress in the community will continue.

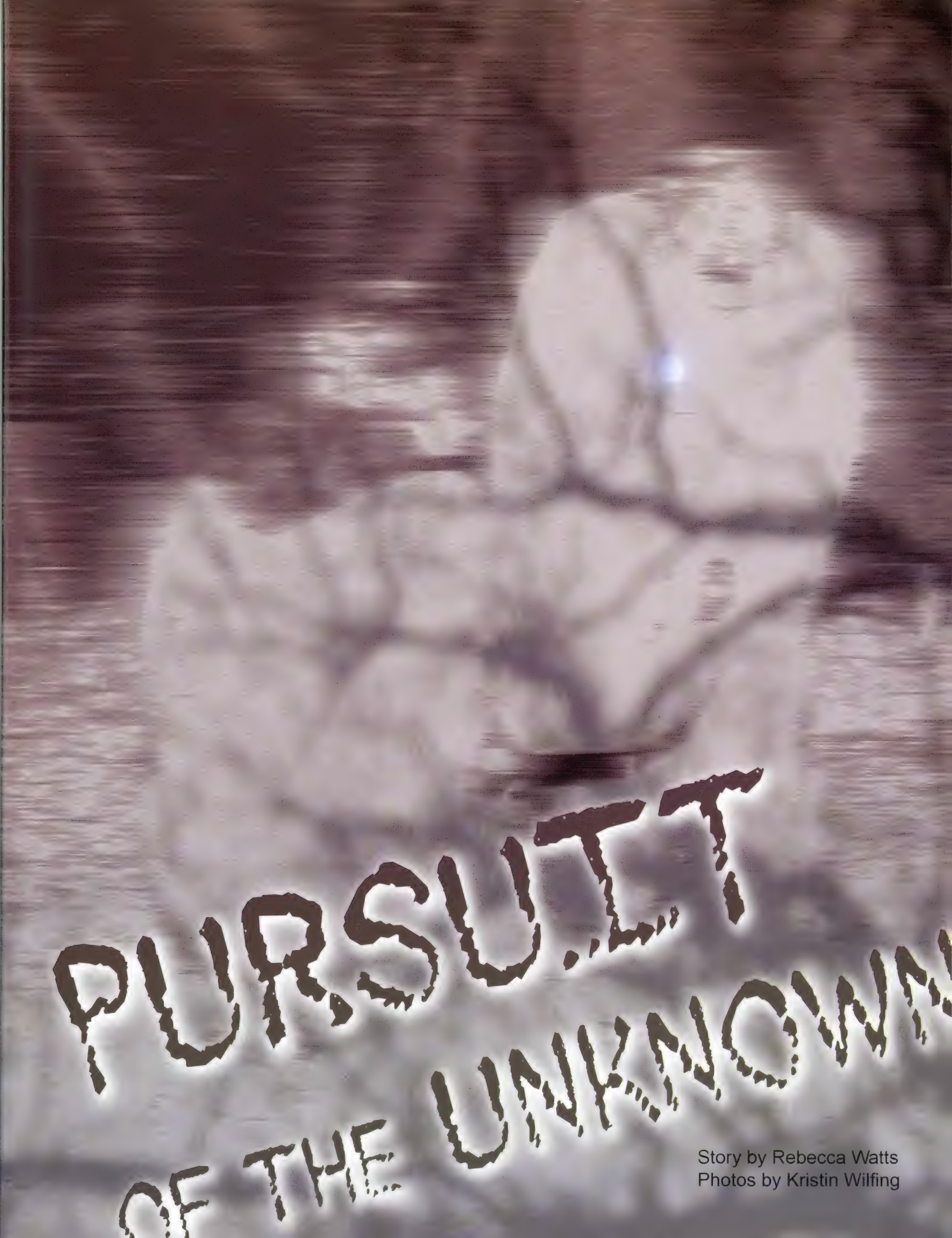
At the end of a long distribution day, the congregation of Faith Fellowship Church and the ILC has accomplished yet another Angel Food delivery. However, it didn't find its success in the numbers of food boxes sold, but the relationship made with the people.

Angel Food ministry not only feeds the physical body but the spiritual body, building lasting friendships within the community and all around the United States. For further information about Angel Food Ministries or to contact the local distributing locations please visit the Web site at www.angelfoodministries.com. ■



"It's great! You would probably pay double in the regular store for what you can get with Angel Food."

- Loretta Baker



PURSUIT OF THE UNKNOWN

Story by Rebecca Watts
Photos by Kristin Wilfing

Ghost Hunters seek answers to area mysteries

There are some things in life that cannot be explained.

Some people call these occurrences "coincidences" or "fate". However, some people have come to believe ghosts haunt our area. A handful of students at Missouri Southern have formed a club to investigate these supernatural reports, and they call themselves the Ghost Hunters.

There are twelve official members of this group. Unfortunately, they are not affiliated with any international group that can be found on the Internet. The group is still young, and connecting to a larger organization is not out of the question.

"I'd like to connect to a larger organization someday for the resources and knowledge base that goes along with that," says Josh Freeman, junior sociology major.

Who Are These People?

The members of Ghost Hunters have a curious-based goal. Nick Haring, junior computer science major, wrote the group slogan. "We seek out the supernatural and try to prove or disprove the existence of ghosts."

"I always had an interest," said Matthew Porte, junior psychology major. "The real experience for me is the study of what makes up the psyche, you know,

what we really want, what we're afraid of. I like to explain the unexplainable."

However there are some that just enjoy the thrill.

"I like the adventure of it. I'm curious to see if [ghosts] exists," said Haring.

"At first I was there just on a whim," said Eric Ostendorf, freshman undecided major, "but after the first night I was hooked."

What Inspired Them?

In the middle of last October, the future founders of Ghost Hunters set out on a quest to simply get scared. Halloween was near, and the weather was fair, so the actual first exploration took place at Peace Church Cemetery, in Joplin.

Peace Church Cemetery is the final resting place of Billy Cook. This deadly serial killer had murdered an entire family and a deputy sheriff. On December 12, 1952, he was put to death in the San Quentin gas chamber. It was his father's wishes for Cook to be buried with him in Peace Church Cemetery. However, so many people defaced the grave he had to be reburied, but where exactly is still a mystery.

Supposedly, the only man who knew where Cook was buried died before he told anyone.

With the background knowledge of Peace Church Cemetery, the Ghost Hunters went to discover the mystery with John Zaffis, a professional ghost hunter who visited the campus in the fall.

"It was just an idea for thrills," Porte said, "But then we decided to get serious."

The more evidence they found and the more unexplained happenings they came upon, the more inspired the Ghost Hunters became.

How They Work

When the group goes to a site that has been claimed to be haunted, they search for electronic voice phenomena, a mysterious event in which human-sounding voices from an unknown source are heard on recording tape, also called EVPs, and other unexplained sounds or sightings. The team uses sound and video recorders, audio tape, regular cameras and, of course, flashlights.

"We're working on getting digital audio tape," Freeman said.

The team doesn't just use mechanical equipment to aid their search. Sometimes the presence of other people can influ-

(Below) Christian Morrison, Josh Freeman, Nick Haring and Eric Ostendorf congregate before exploring haunted territory. (Right) Eric Ostendorf and Matthew Porte have gained experience with making recordings and analyzing them during their participation with the club.





Nick Haring, Josh Freeman and Christian Morrison reflect on the evening's events at IHOP.

ence what happens on a search.

"Other bystanders can be just as important to be able to see other's perspectives, to make sure you're not just seeing what you want to see," Parks said.

When the group finds something, they record it and sometimes bring it back to Southern to analyze it with an audio software program.

"Soundforge by Sony works the best for picking out certain noises, or another program called Audacity," Ostendorf said.

Although the audio systems help them to determine what they hear, they also use other types of media to get a better idea of what they see.

We have some infrared video feeds of

the sights we've been to," Parks said.

However, the Ghost Hunters are incorporating new techniques to create better results all the time,

"We weren't as scientific [then] as we are now," Haring said, "but we've found a voice on the audio recorder that

doesn't sound like anyone else in the room."

Seeing the Abnormal

Freeman says he saw a ghost last Halloween. The sighting happened when the Ghost Hunters were searching Peace Church Cemetery. Freeman said the setting was perfect for something to occur. There was a thick fog on the ground and also sudden bursts of coldness in the air. They had split into two groups because the best experiences had happened in small teams.

There had been strange happenings all night and the group was terrified. The sighting happened when Freeman got into his car and looked into his rearview

window. In his backseat was a vaporous apparition of a woman with long hair and a thin face. Freeman said he immediately drove off to leave the cemetery for a while.

What the Future Holds

The group is enthusiastic about what the future holds for them.

"Hopefully, we can keep our numbers steady," Ostendorf said. "I know I'm the youngest in the group, so I know I'll try to keep it going."

"I hope we continue this out of college," Porte said, "like aside from our real jobs, that way we could have better equipment some day."

The End of the Story

Ghost Hunters is not about believing in ghosts. Some members said it's about facing fears and searching for answers no one else is brave enough to consider.


Several of the students look at it as an opportunity to learn more about the afterlife, or the journey to get there. Some members believe ghosts were people that experienced a traumatic event in their life and are still finishing something here on earth.

To join, or to find out more information about Ghost Hunters, please visit their profile at www.facebook.com and go to "Moso Ghost Hunters." ¶¶

"WE SEEK OUT THE
SUPERNATURAL AND TRY
TO PROVE OR DISPROVE
THE EXISTENCE OF GHOSTS."

- NICK HARING





Story by Rebecca Watts
Photos by Kristin Wilfing

Internationally recognized company driven by ambition to reach teens

There's a loud banging of skaters' wheels on hard ramps. Kids of all ages run around The Bridge searching for an activity. They will find there are plenty.

There are video games and basketball to play, merchandise to look at, music to listen to, friends to hang out with, or the most popular choices, skating and biking.

The American Ramp Company (ARC) helped make The Bridge a reality six years ago. What started as a ministry for local kids has turned into an internationally recognized corporation.

ARC designs, manufactures and builds skate parks all over the world. Currently there are 37 employees. They are building up their inventory for the busy season, which is April through October. ARC has been in Joplin for seven years, but they have built skate parks all over the globe.

"We have skate parks in almost all 50 states," said Jim Moss, ARC CEO.

The first skate parks were made in Arizona and Alaska, made of wood only. Now the company builds ramps mostly out of steel.

Nathan Bemo and Damon Schuber were the two main founders of the company. Bemo was a general business major from Missouri Southern, and Schuber has a sales/marketing degree from Ozark Christian College. The idea for the company began in Bemo's garage.

ARC employees do not just work for a paycheck. They have an ambition behind their work driving themselves to reach out to teenagers. Moss, who has worked as the CEO for four years, has no plans of leaving this job.

"All jobs get tough," Moss said, "but I enjoy it."

Bemo, who is also the owner and design manager, has had other options in occupations, but chose to live his dream.

"I love what I do," Bemo said. "I wasn't content with any other jobs."

His partner agrees.

"It's obvious that it's his calling," Branham said. "He is just so enthusiastic about this open mission field where he reaches so many kids on an athletic level."

ARC "stands out from any other competitor" because of their choice selec-



tion in manufacturing a park. There are three different styles of manufacturing the frames of a ramp: the triple layer X-series, which is said to be the safest of the three; the wood-framed Stealth series and the Pro series, made of steel. The Pro series is the most chosen of the customers at 93 percent.

"We give our customer the pros and cons of each product," Moss said. "We're very responsive to our customer's reports."

When a city wants to shop for a skate park, they will invite more than one company to set up demos to experiment on what the city wants or needs. There are several factors that encourage a sale, such as cost, noise level created and what the kids prefer to use. This is where the ARC's three choice selections come into play.

"This way the city doesn't have to just choose one style," Moss said. "When they choose our great selection they're also the heroes, according to the kids."

The purpose of building a skate park can be condensed into one issue: it's a place for the kids. Rick Jones, of Aurora, tried to convince the city for a year it needed a skate park.

"We were the first outdoor skate park in southwest Missouri," Jones said. "It took about a year, but we got some pledges from businesses and signatures from the community and we got it."

A skate park in Nevada, Missouri, was built in 18 months and had no problem staying within the city budget of \$120 thousand.

"They're a company that has started small and has grown," said Carol Branham, parks and recreation director for Nevada. "They are all about one-on-one customer service, and that's what matters to people. They know how to sell themselves."

When installing a skate park, the designers look for skater-friendly ramps. Some companies have built courses where it's easy for the skaters to run into each other. Also, ARC installs the courses to where it would be easy to add on to the park.

"When the city finds out it's not just a fad, we're able to go in and make the additions with no problems," Moss said.

The biggest obstacles for ARC are the competitors. There are two companies associated with Playground Industries and four other companies focused solely on just skating.

"ARC is skater-friendly and gives free design work," Moss said. "What sets us apart from the others is, when a city chooses us, they're not just picking one type of material, that way everyone wins."

As a local company, ARC gets its materials from the four-state area. The steel comes from Central Plains (Missouri) Steel, the laser work is done in



**"THEY'RE
GREAT PEOPLE
WHO HAVE
SUPPORTED
US FROM DAY
ONE."**

- LINDSAY MATUSH

ARC has installed ramps across the globe including Canada, China, Hong Kong and Puerto Rico. All employees, including Andrew Hordos, play a part in the international success.



The Bridge uses ramps built by American Ramp Company.



National statistics consistently show that skateboarding has less reported injuries than many other activities like baseball and in-line skating.

Galena, Kansas, the powder coats used on top of the steel are done in Carthage and the lighting, tubing and pipe work is done in Joplin.

The newest feature for ARC is the trucking ability. There are two new diesel trucks and other smaller trucks with flatbed trailers to ship their products across the country.

After ARC completes a skate park, its job isn't finished. It does free outside repair work, and they keep in touch with the skate parks to see if improvements are needed. Bemo is still an active member on the board of trustees for The Bridge. When The Bridge first opened its doors, he donated their first bowl ramp. Donating the bowl ramp wasn't a first for Bemo, he has also donated a mobile half-pipe to Nevada for a parade. The skate park at Aurora keeps in touch with the ARC at least once a year.

"After we got the park built we held a skating competition with the ARC," Jones said. "On May 20 this year, we're hosting our sixth annual skating competition."

"The key to success in this field is programming," Branham said. "Giving the kids a chance to show off what they've practiced so much in competition is how to keep a skate park successful."

Lindsay Matush, The Bridge marketing director, said that without the ARC The Bridge would not be where it's at today. The Bridge is a skate park and hangout based on a Christian ambition of giving the community a place for their youth. They have accommodated up to 550 students per week in their old location. Recently, however, The Bridge has had to transcend to a new location due to the growth of attendance by the youth.

"When I first came here it was just a youth group thing," said Brook Hoen-shell, the financial assistant for The Bridge.

"We desperately need this new building," Matush said. "We [were] cramped for space."

ARC's help to The Bridge has made an impact on many people.

"They've been phenomenal," Matush said. "They've given so much to the community."

ARC has reached out 50 miles away to work with their customers.

"I have no problem giving a positive recommendation about the ARC," Branham said.

The Bridge has been open at its new location since April 7. To find out more information about The Bridge please visit www.thebridgejoplin.com. Also, to find out more information about the American Ramp Company, please go to www.americanrampcompany.com.

"Their generosity is tireless," Matush said. "They're great people who have supported us from day one." ¶



CAND

GOURME



CANDY HOUSE GOURMET CHOCOLATES

Story by Wendy Xiong
Photos by Kristin Wilfing

Business creates sweets to satisfy hard-core cravings

Chocolate and sweet treats are what people love, and Candy House Gourmet Chocolates offers a variety of candy for any sweet tooth.

Originally named Richardson's Candy House, it is now known as Candy House Gourmet Chocolates. Purchased in September 1999, owner Terry Hicklin now runs the company and is expanding the business in many ways.

There has been a 500 percent growth in business since Hicklin has purchased the business and a 1,000 percent growth in the last ten years of business. Hicklin's purchase in machinery and investments has made the chocolate and candy production faster and better.

"I like the growth and expansion and taking it to the next level," Hicklin said.

Hicklin has started what he calls event marketing. He produces certain products at certain times of the year. In May, for Mother's Day, he brought the creation of chocolate covered strawberries to the candy shop. This is only done for about six weeks when the strawberries are in season. In October, caramel apples are produced for consumers.

The production of these items are Hicklin's idea along with new products he created himself. He created Missouri Walking Sticks, which are pretzels covered with caramel and pecans then drizzled with white, milk and dark chocolate. One of the most popular products, caramel nut corn, was a creation by Hicklin. These new products are offered with the original candies that are still being produced.

Hicklin has also included new items that can only be purchased



Missouri Walking Sticks originated at the Candy House and include white, milk and dark chocolate.



Terry Hicklin is the owner of Candy House Gourmet Chocolates and plays an active roll in the business.

at Candy House Gourmet Chocolates. He is currently looking at new products such as jams and roasted nuts. Products such as coffee, cracker spreads, cookies and flavored syrups are now included at the shops.

New product packaging is something Hicklin is working on. The company has created new gift baskets, towers and boxes.

Hicklin said his ideas are "patterning from Harry and David," one of the biggest gift basket companies.

The Candy House also fills personal orders for different businesses. They create chocolate molds and business cards with the company logo, which brings in more profit. Candy House Gourmet Chocolates is now also sold online with Sam's Club, and more bids from different companies are coming in.

Hicklin wants to build more business without more retail.

The candy shop is a retail store and production factory. Here there is a chocolate production line and a kitchen factory. Glass windows allow customers to see the production of chocolates and various sweets and tours are also given at the candy shop. Entering the chocolate production line is a chocolate lover's dream. A

newly purchased conveyer belt with a chocolate fountain helps to cover the candy in chocolate. Before this was purchased all of the chocolates were dipped and covered by hand. Whatever item needs to be covered in chocolate will travel down the line and the bottom is coated in chocolate. Then it slowly continues onto a chocolate waterfall that covers the top of the candy. This process is sometimes repeated. Then a design is created with melted chocolate on top. All of the candy is made by hand but with the purchase of new machinery, production is now faster and efficiency has increased.

The shop has kettles containing chocolate that are constantly moving to maintain a certain temperature. Chocolate is pumped out at 105 degrees Fahrenheit then is brought down to 84 degrees to maintain good sugar crystals in the chocolate. This gives the chocolate that is used for molds a shiny look instead of a dull or chalky finish.

"There is a lot of chemistry with chocolate," Hicklin said.

The kitchen factory also contains new machinery that has helped production. Sugar candies such as caramels, divinity



The variety of items found at the Candy House is a culmination of the owner continually striving to find new products.



Laurel Bailey schedules tours of the Candy House by appointment.



Each piece of candy has to pass inspection before being packaged.

and fudge were constantly stirred by hand and the temperature constantly monitored, but with the purchase of new kettles this process is now easier. The fire kettle keeps the cooking candy at the right temperature without getting too hot or too cold. A stainless steel table that has hot and cold water running under it has helped in the cooling and cutting of candy. Usually a marble table is used to cool down the candy but sometimes it cools it too fast so the stainless steel table is used. The purchase of two new candy cutters has also paid off. The first one was purchased for about \$600 and the new one for about \$2,000.

In 2000, Hicklin took a trip to Erie, Pennsylvania, to attend Retail Confectioners International. It was a course lasting 15 days, which taught about chocolate confectionery. The class only allowed 25 individuals to partake in the class.

The class itself helps with chocolate and candy production and entrepreneurial success. Here Hicklin learned about candy making and the success behind it. Now Hicklin is on the board of the Association for Retail Confectioners International and is doing the marketing for the company itself.

The retail shop has glass cases containing an assortment of chocolates and sweets. Different flavored truffles are piled high on top of one another with colorful decoration. Fudge flavors from vanilla pecan to chocolate walnut are lined side by side. Pecan delights and other chocolate covered treats also are contained in the glass cases.

There are currently four Candy House Gourmet Chocolates shops located in southwest Missouri. The first was opened in 1970 in Joplin. The shop is still open and maintains the classic candy shop look. This shop is located on Highway 86 South, 454 Redings Mill Road.

In 2002, a store was opened in Carthage located on 2408 Grand Avenue. There is also a location preparing to open located on 3857 South Campbell Avenue in Springfield. The store, located on 510 Kentucky Avenue, Joplin, was opened on November 17, 2004.

Candy House Gourmet Chocolates has come a long way since it first opened in 1970 in the Missouri Ozarks. The business has been transformed into a southwest Missouri Chocolate escape. The shops offer a variety of sweets for people of any age. ||



SEARCHING

for the

CURE



Canadian family utilizes Joplin billboards to seek diagnosis for son

When a child's life is on the line, a mother would do anything to save her child. Mandi Hein, a native from Canada and mother of a girl and twin boys, decided to take the extra step and advertise across the country, as well as have a Web site set up where tips could come in, to discover what's stealing her son's life.

Cole Hein, Mandi's four-year-old son, has had health difficulties from the time he was born. However, the

most serious is an undiagnosed condition in which Cole dry heaves (also called "retching") to the point that he stops breathing.

The biggest problem for Cole and his family is that he does not self-recover. To start his breathing again, Cole's back has to be rubbed or, in an extreme case, CPR has to be administered. Although some have said he might outgrow this, no one is sure since a diagnosis has not been found.

Cole was born on January 26, 2001, along with his fraternal twin brother, Eric. Their older sister, 11, is named Kaela.

"I refer to them as cheater twins, two for the price of one," Mandi said.

However, both boys had a struggle ahead of them as they were only 29 weeks old and had low-birth weights when they were born. Cole was 3 pounds 1 ounce and Eric weighed 3 pounds 4 ounces. Eric would also be



Cure4Cole.com

Perhaps **YOU** have the knowledge to save our son. Please help.

LAMAR

LAMAR

Lamar Advertising has been an intricate part of advertising the need of a cure for Cole.

diagnosed with cerebral palsy. However, their weight was considered good for their age.

"The first time we held Cole, he was 10 days old," Mandi said.

The boys were placed in the NICU and were not released until September 19 of that year, which was also Mandi's birthday. But the joy of having them home would only last five days. It was then that Cole stopped breathing and, consequently, the Heins found out Cole had bad reflux.

The physicians put Cole on medication for reflux, but he continued to throw up and stop breathing. Later Cole underwent a major surgery called Open Nissen Fundoplication. Once the surgery was completed, Cole went five months without any symptoms. Mandi said it was amazing to have a "normal" baby.

However, in September 2002, Cole started to retch again.

"Your body's racking," Mandi said. "Your body's dry heaving. That's what he's doing."

Mandi took Cole to the doctor and discovered that he needed more surgery. However, no doctor would perform it because Cole wasn't exhibiting the symptoms necessary. This was the case even after she received a second opinion.

After Mandi took action and got a video of Cole dry heaving, this changed. She

"Your body's racking.
Your body's dry heaving.
That's what he's doing."

- Mandi Hein, Cole's mother

caught four such episodes of it happening.

"It wasn't until I got it on video that they took notice," she said.

The doctors immediately admitted Cole back into the ICU and planned surgery to put Cole's stomach back in place. (It had been sitting over his lung.) During the surgery they also sewed up a hole in his diaphragm. However, this did not cure his retching.

"Cole sees doctors and physicians more than he sees his grandparents," Mandi said. "He can put anyone through a physical."

Whenever the doctors were finally able to see Cole retch for the first time, Mandi believed that this would be a changing point. However, when she didn't feel things had changed as she hoped she took another step in an effort to save her son.

"I was frustrated and thought if a dog can alert for cry-

ing, why not for him retching?" Mandi said.

It was then Mandi contacted the National Service Dogs, based out of Cambridge, Ontario, to see if they could receive a dog that would bark when Cole started to dry heave.

"His name is Bingo," Cole said. "He speaks."

Bingo is a Jack-Russell Terrier that was trained especially for Cole. After the two were deemed compatible, the Heins family received Bingo on May 27, 2004.

Since Bingo has been placed with the family, there have been five confirmed saves for Cole.

"She's a God-send," Mandi said.

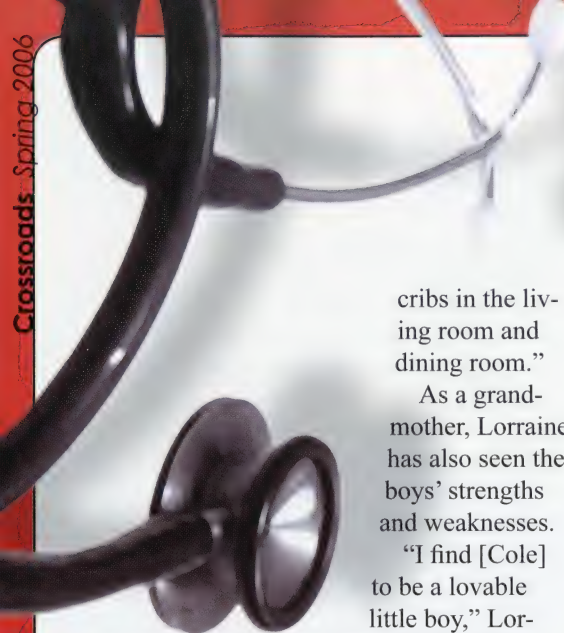
Lorraine Hein, Mandi's mother-in-law, has also seen the blessing Bingo has been to her grandchildren.

"He's a member of the family," Lorraine said.

Lorraine, due to distance, only sees her grandchildren four to six times a year, usually for a week each time. Having been there from the beginning, she has seen the struggles the family, and in particular Cole and Eric, has had.

"Life was a pretty big struggle for them at the beginning," Lorraine said. "They had their





cribs in the living room and dining room.”

As a grandmother, Lorraine has also seen the boys’ strengths and weaknesses.

“I find [Cole] to be a lovable little boy,” Lorraine said. “He’s pretty much normal. He likes all the things a little boy likes.”

About Eric, she said due to cerebral palsy, he is a little bit slower to do certain things, but he’s “extremely bright with numbers and counting.”

A member of a Lutheran church for the past 30 years, Lorraine says she gets her strength from the Lord and other sources.

“You have to get strength from other people as well,” Lorraine said.

And that is what Mandi has sought to do through the billboards and Web site.

During a particular bad time for Cole, with the family still looking for a diagnosis, Mandi went into a restroom where there happen to be an ad for tattoos.

“I thought, ‘Why couldn’t this be done for Cole,’” Mandi said.

So Mandi called Lamar Advertising Company to see if they could advertise the Web site that had previously been made for Cole called Cure4Cole.com. Lamar Advertising not only said yes, it also designed and placed the billboards for free.

“It’s never been done before,” Mandi said.

The billboards can be seen in Tyler, Texas; Sherman, Texas; Columbia, South Carolina; Lake Charles, Louisiana; Traverse City, Michigan; Lenoir, North Carolina; Allentown, Pennsylvania; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Palm Springs, California; several sites in Canada and several in Joplin. There

are also two billboards in central Ohio and on the backs on three buses in Vancouver, Canada.

Monica Robinson, a Lamar Advertising employee, was the one to convince locally run Lamar branches across the continent to donate space to run Cole’s ad.

The billboards have a picture of Cole with the Web site address on it. Along with the information, there is a text that reads, “Perhaps YOU have the knowledge to save our son. Please help.”

Mandi hopes the ads will reach someone who will have information that might give the family a diagnosis for what’s making Cole retch.

Besides the billboards being used in an effort to obtain information, Eric Dodge, a country singer, wrote a song called “The Other Child” which is about the healthy child inside of Cole and who he could be if enough people help.

This came about after Mandi asked him if he would mind donating some items for an auction on eBay in an effort to raise money for one of Cole’s surgeries. He said, “yes” and asked if there was anything else he could do. Mandi asked him to write this song.

“It’s touched more lives than just Cole’s,” Mandi said.

Since the billboards, Cole has continued to struggle with this undiagnosed illness. One of the hardest days for Mandi came on November 8, 2005. She described it as the day they almost lost Cole. She said the back stimulation didn’t work and it took “full out” CPR to bring him back. After that Cole was in the hospital for a few more days, but is now (at the time of writing) back at home.

The family is still

“I find [Cole] to be a lovable little boy. He’s pretty much normal. He likes all the things a little boy likes.”

— Lorraine Hein, Cole’s grandmother

persevering

and keeps a positive outlook. Kaela has recently hosted a school supply drive for children in Afghanistan.

“I’m so proud of her,” Lorraine said.

Currently, the drive is still going and more and more school supplies are being sent over.

Eric and Cole are still four-year-old boys who, Lorraine said, still fight and play. However, Cole’s sickness is sometimes hard for Eric.

“It gets to Eric,” Mandi said.

Mandi also said that Cole’s attitude has been inspirational to them.

“Cole’s more of a trooper than we are,” Mandi said. “We were lucky to get him. He goes through tests, surgeries, and he bounces back.”

Mandi said Cole is their teacher and “he always has a smile on his face.”

Mandi just hopes someone has information that could save their son.

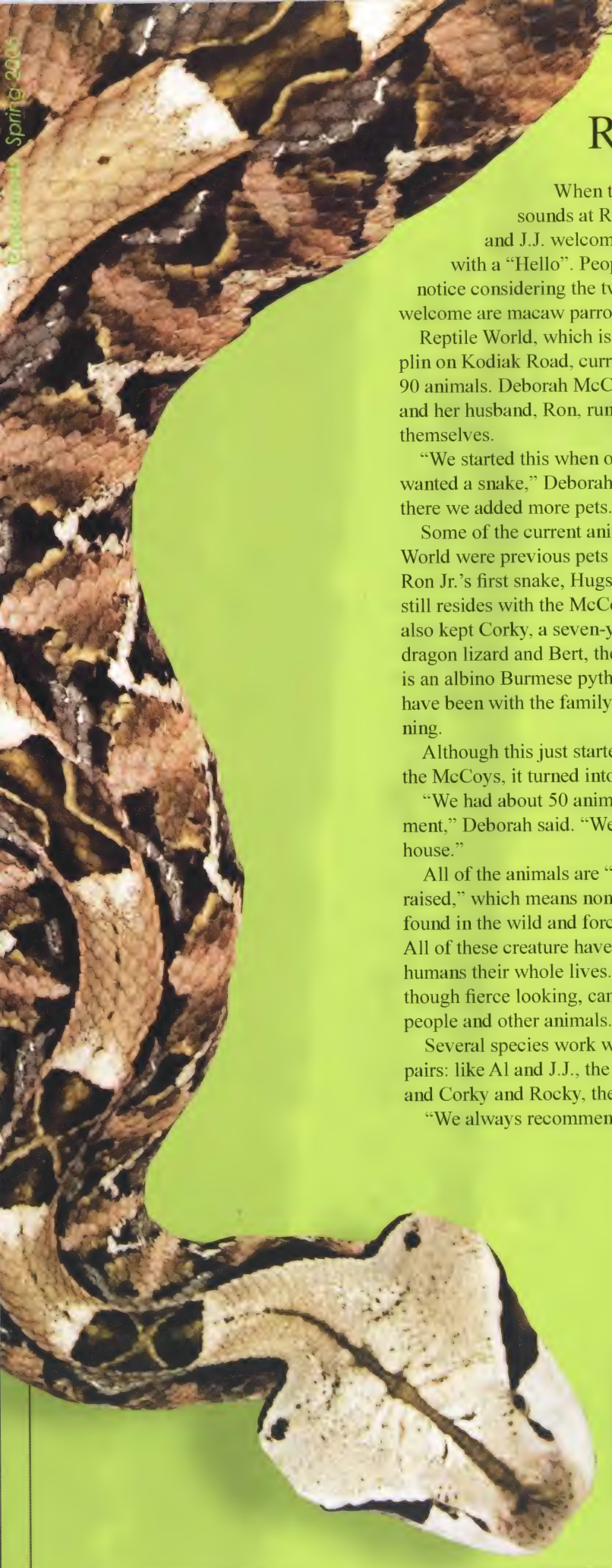
To learn more about Cole and his family, or if you think you might have information that could help Cole, please go to www.cure4cole.com. ¶





snakes alive!

Story by Rebecca Watts
Photos by Kristin Wilfing



Reptile pets outgrow home

When the doorbell sounds at Reptile World, Al and J.J. welcome their visitors with a "Hello". People normally take notice considering the two stating the welcome are macaw parrots.

Reptile World, which is located east of Joplin on Kodiak Road, currently houses about 90 animals. Deborah McCoy, the owner, and her husband, Ron, run the business by themselves.

"We started this when our son [Ron Jr.] wanted a snake," Deborah said, "then from there we added more pets."

Some of the current animals at Reptile World were previous pets of the owners. Ron Jr.'s first snake, Hugs, a Ball python, still resides with the McCoy's. They have also kept Corky, a seven-year-old bearded dragon lizard and Bert, the "mascot", which is an albino Burmese python. Hugs and Bert have been with the family since the beginning.

Although this just started as a hobby for the McCoy's, it turned into an everyday job.

"We had about 50 animals in our basement," Deborah said. "We just outgrew our house."

All of the animals are "captive-born-raised," which means none of them were found in the wild and forced into the store. All of these creature have been raised by humans their whole lives. Some animals, although fierce looking, can be gentle toward people and other animals.

Several species work well together in pairs: like Al and J.J., the macaw parrots, and Corky and Rocky, the bearded lizards.

"We always recommend bearded lizards

for pets," Deborah said. "They are the most friendly little guys."

Deborah and Ron said some of the "most friendly" animals in Reptile World are Bert, the ten-foot-long albino Burmese python, Jack and Jill, the spiny-tailed lizards, and J.J. who will say "hi," "bye," "I love you," "pretty bird" and "Polly want a cracker."

Every animal in the collection has something that makes it unique from the other animals.

When Jack and Jill breathe, a unique effect occurs. These lizards are from an environment where they don't drink as much water as they do in captivity. The way their systems work results in salt residue rings around their snouts.

"If you don't clean him off, sometimes he looks like a salted margarita glass," Deborah said.

When visitors come to see the animals, Deborah and Ron will take out the friendly ones to see up close, and touch, if desired. Hugs and Bert are just a couple animals visitors can feel or hold.

Guests in Ron's section of the building are not allowed to hold the dangerous reptiles. In the first cage is Baby. This 220-pound, 15-foot-long Burmese Python will someday weigh up to 400 pounds.

Baby can squeeze with a force of 9,000 pounds of pressure for 15 minutes. His meals are composed of 90 pounds of frozen food a month, which comes out to about five or six dead rabbits per week.

In the next cage is Monty, the albino Monocle cobra, who strikes against the glass cage when approached.



"Fifteen minutes with him and you'd be done," Ron said.

Across from Monty are the rattlesnakes from Arizona, Oklahoma and Texas. Even though the short-tempered snakes are secure in their cages, visitors can hear the rattle-shake warnings clearly.

Along with Monty, an aggressive albino Monocle cobra, there are other highly dangerous "biters" in this section. Gabby and Zsa Zsa, the African Gaboon Vipers, are side by side. Their fangs are packaged and displayed next to their names within their cage. These fangs can shed 3,000 times in a lifetime.

Right next door to Gabby is Maddie, the Eastern Green Mamba. She is bright green, 5.5-feet-long and has a slender body and head.

"She's one of our most deadliest snakes in here," Ron said, "but working with animals is like working with a kitchen stove. It'll burn you if you don't use it right."

"All snakes have a way of warning you they're about to strike," he said.

The McCoys have to be cautious when housing animals together. When an

animal is dangerous to another, or to keep them from reproducing, they will be separated.

"It's possible for a snake to eat a whole other snake," Ron said.

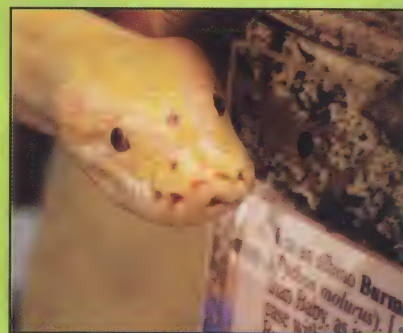
On the other side of the wall are the other "mascots" of Reptile World: Snappy, the alligator, and Scrappy, the "unfriendly" crocodile from Africa. Ron and Deborah are not sure if Snappy is a boy or a girl yet.

"If it gets longer than eight feet, then we'll know it's a boy," Ron said.

Although venom is dangerous, a constrictor such as Baby, the 220-pound Burmese python, will kill faster. When Baby is fed, Ron warms up frozen meat, and the snake thinks the meat is alive. When the python coils around its prey, it waits for the heart to stop beating.

"We don't do any live feeding here," Ron said. "We get out food for the animals from all over."

Reptile World buys much of its food from Oklahoma City and off the Internet.



Bert, an albino Burmese python, is Reptile World's mascot and one of the original pets that started the collection.





P.J., a Caique parrot, leans back when held by Deborah McCoy.

The McCoy's also use frozen white New Zealand rabbits from Carthage. A live rodent can be found in a cage above Snappy, the alligator, but he's not for eating. However, Ron likes to tease the visiting children that the rodent is "dinner."

Ron and Deborah feed their meat-eating animals frozen foods to decrease the chance of disease. They once used chicken, but don't anymore because there was an increasing rate of Salmonella found in the food industry.

If a creature becomes sick for any reason, the McCoy's don't have to be alone in the healing process.

"If one of the animals gets sick, and we don't have the medicine needed here," Ron said, "we take them to the vet in Nixa, Missouri."

Deborah and Ron sometimes "baby-sit" animals for a fee to cover room and board. For five months, there have been three "friendly" red-tailed boas staying with the McCoy's. The McCoy's are now at a point where they must turn down offered pets because of the lack of space in the building.

"We added onto our building in November 2002," Deborah said, "and we still need more space again."

"When we have 60 kids in here at a time, it gets pretty crowded," Ron said.

Sometimes these animals are pampered for emotional reasons. At one point Bubba, Mallory and Mr. Nasty, three Savannah

monitors, were all living together inside the same cage.

One day, Mr. Nasty and Mallory got into a fight, had a hold of each other by the tails and were not letting go. When Deborah saw this happening, she turned a hose on them. After some time she finally broke up the fight, and separated the monitors.

"I thought they'd drown before they'd let go," Deborah said.

However, the problem was not over. When Mallory couldn't see Mr. Nasty anymore, she quit eating. The only solution Deborah and Ron could concoct was to place the cages side by side, which was exactly what the animals needed. To this day, the two are still together, but remain in separate cages.

At the end of Ron's tour, guests are offered to go see the bird room. The rooms hold three caged birds, and two that are "free to do what they want." The caged birds prefer their cages because it makes them feel safe from the larger birds.

P.J., the Caique parrot, leans back against Deborah when she holds him. He sometimes fights for attention when Lexie, the red and blue feathered Australian Eclectus, is near. Al and J.J., the Macaw parrots, are kept towards the front of the building because they're the happiest when they get attention.

When Al and J.J. become excited they bob their heads from side to side. Deborah claims they learned "that dance" from a smaller bird that once lived with them.

Other side attractions in the building are: the six Sukata turtles; Pops, the green iguana; the tarantula spider and the fat-tailed geckos.

For more information on Reptile World and the features it offers, please visit its Web site at www.reptileworld.com.

"The goal is to teach people that they're not all dangerous," Ron said. "They just get a bad names sometimes." ■



An Author, A Playwright

Persistence decides fate for determined man

Traveling through time as his hand grasps his pencil, he has faced death, righted wrongs and conversed with William Shakespeare on a regular basis.

Gary Blackwood, an author and playwright, has written numerous fiction books such as *The Shakespeare Stealer* and *Wild Timothy*, as well as many other books, plays and non-fiction. He was raised in rural Pennsylvania and loved to read since he was a young child.

"When I was maybe four or so, I told my mother I'd stop sucking my thumb if she'd buy me a series of little Gene Autry (a singing cowboy actor) books I'd seen advertised on a cereal box," Blackwood said. "She did, and I did, and I wore those books out."

Growing up going to a one-room schoolhouse, Blackwood's only source to a library was a single bookshelf where class was held. However, Blackwood said this was more books than he ever saw in one place. Although none of the teachers had a big influence on him, his third-grade teacher gave him a book of short stories that he said, "impressed him greatly."

From elementary school until high school, Blackwood developed into a writer. The first stories he remembered writing were when he was nine or ten. Then in his early teens, he started to submit stories to different publishers,

only to be rejected numerous times.

"The first stories I sent out, when I was 13 or so, were roundly ignored, and rightfully so," Blackwood said, "But when I was 16, one of them earned a very flattering letter from a well-known editor, which helped keep me going until I published [a book]."

When Blackwood was 19, he finally found a story of his being published in a magazine. It was when he was in junior high that he decided he wanted to be a writer for a living. A nonfiction author had come to speak at his school.

"Until that point, I wasn't real sure a person actually could make a living writing," Blackwood said.

Before becoming an author, Blackwood found himself working at a variety of jobs. He did home repairs, worked loading meat trucks, worked at a frozen food plant, worked as a clerk in bookstores and office supply stores and worked for a time period digitizing a library's card catalog.

In 1987, he was finally able to publish his first book, *Wild Timothy*. Before this he had tried unsuccessfully to get nine books published, but now he was finally able to know what it felt like to be a published author. However, even after his first book was published, Blackwood still did not have much success in the business world. After his first three books were

published, his editor was fired and then it was another seven years before anyone was interested in his work.

But Blackwood didn't give up. As ideas came in, he continued to write what he found.

"[Ideas] rain down on me continually, from all quarters," Blackwood said. "I find them in the things I read, the places I go, the people I see."

This was the case when he wrote *The Shakespeare Stealer*. In *The Shakespeare Stealer*, a young boy named Widge is hired by Dr. Bright, who teaches him a system of shorthand he invented so Widge can steal sermons for him.

Blackwood originally stumbled upon this idea when he read about a real Dr. Timothy Bright who had invented shorthand in the 1580s. From there the idea about stealing plays by using Dr. Bright's shorthand flowed into Blackwood's mind and onto the paper.

Blackwood has written in many different genres. Besides writing another historical fiction book, *The Year of the Hangman*, he has also written science fiction, several fantasies, a western and nonfiction.

His nonfiction includes a book about pirates, one about highway men, and a book called *Enigmatic Events*, which is a book about unexplained mysteries in history. Blackwood has written plays as well. One of his plays is based on his book *The Shakespeare Stealer*.

One person who saw this play, which is performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. is Joyce Stanton, his nonfiction editor at Marshall Cavendish Benchmark Publishers. She has known Blackwood for about ten years.

"Gary is a highly intelligent man, sensitive," Stanton said. "He has integrity and is deeply moral, while being open-minded and compassionate. He is also fiercely independent."

Stanton says these qualities are all reflected in his writing.

After growing up in a rural setting, Blackwood would eventually make his way down to Missouri, even finding himself teaching a playwriting class at Missouri Southern until *The Shakespeare Stealer* became nationally known.

Blackwood has since been on campus numerous times. Before his recent move to Canada, Blackwood had visited Dr. Doris Walters' class four times. Walters teaches Children's Literature in the English department. She met Blackwood when he was doing a performance as Henry David Thoreau about 15 years ago.

"He's always been very concerned about ecology," she said. "He really connect[ed] that with Thoreau."

After their initial meeting, Walters, though the English Honor Society, brought Blackwood in to speak, resulting in about 300 people coming to hear him. It was after this, in 2001, that Blackwood started to visit her classes.

"[He] usually gets paid \$500 or \$1000 [for a visit], but



Gary Blackwood

Submitted Photo

he came here for free," Walters said. "The students always thought it was a great experience overall."

Blackwood has also visited the campus for a peace rally held on September 10, 2002. There his daughter, Tegan, and wife, Jean, also participated in the rally.

Since Blackwood has started writing, his work has received various awards. One such award was for *Moonshine*, a book set in McDonald County and in Branson. It was named by Smithsonian Magazine as a Notable Children's Book in 1999. It was also a finalist for the literary award from the Society of Midland Authors.

"It's a book that tugs at your heart strings," Walters said.

He has also received awards for *The Shakespeare Stealer*, *The Dying Sun*, *Shakespeare's Scribe*, as well as others.

Even though Blackwood has had success as an author, this success has not come without time and effort on his part. It takes about two months for Blackwood to do research before he starts writing, which has not gone unnoticed by his fans.

"He had to know his history in order to write alternative fiction [as in *The Year of the Hangman*]," Walters said.

After the research is done and the needed information has been gathered, it usually takes Blackwood anywhere from six to seven months of actual writing time. Blackwood revises his work as he goes and usually spends at the most five to eight hours writing. From there, the editing process can

take up to several weeks to complete.

However, even with the hard work involved, Blackwood has his motive, and even a hidden agenda, behind his writing.

"Naturally, I hope the reader enjoys the stories and identifies with the characters," Blackwood said. "But I'd also like him or her to come away with something to think about."

He also wishes for students to "see, don't read, a Shakespeare play."

Although he has nothing against reading, Blackwood can see that there is a problem for most youth with reading a Shakespearean tale.

"For most high-school students, the language is difficult and off-putting, so it's easy to [be] soured on Shakespeare for good, if you try to make sense of it on a page," Blackwood said. "But when you see good actors perform a Shakespeare play, the language becomes quite clear and vibrant, and it leaves you wanting more."

If anyone would like more information on Blackwood or his works, they can visit the Spiva Library, which contains 11 books by Blackwood or they can visit their local bookstore. His work is also sold by Scholastic and numerous on-line Web sites.

To find more information about his play *The Shakespeare Stealer*, they can log onto: <http://www.kennedy-center.org/programs/family/shakespeare/behindthescenes.html>. ¶

BLACKWOOD

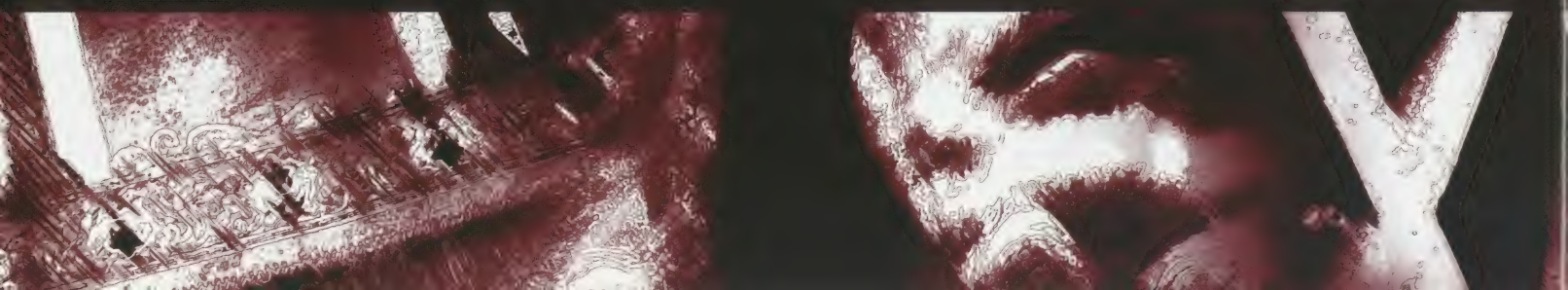
"Gary is a highly intelligent man, sensitive. He has integrity and is deeply moral, while being open-minded and compassionate. He is also fiercely independent."

— Joyce Stanton



BELIEFS

By Faith Ducommun



ISLAM CHRISTIANITY

Students face religious differences on campus

RELIGION N. A BELIEF IN A DIVINE OR SUPERHUMAN POWER OR POWERS TO BE OBEYED AND WORSHIPED AS THE CREATOR(S) AND RULER(S) OF THE UNIVERSE. SUCH A BELIEF IS EXPRESSED IN CONDUCT AND RITUAL.

The word "religion", in reality, is impossible to define simply because it is defined by each and every person individually. According to Dr. Barry Brown, professor of philosophy, religion is like an evolving plant that continually grows and expands. It becomes something that was not originally intended and shoots off in different directions.

Such a belief is hard to contain and even harder to define. Brown says that the reason why many people search for some higher being or a better way of life is because of the natural inclination in many people to find solace in what religion offers, find safety and comfort or so that they may feel accepted.

On the Southern's campus there are many students who practice religions from all over the world. These students are neighbors, friends and classmates who can express their way of life in a variety of different outlets.

On this campus alone there are four major religions that are adept to the college lifestyle: Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

It was stated earlier in the definition that

religion is an expression of belief through conduct and ritual. These stories do not necessarily reflect all of those who believe in each particular religion or philosophical ideas. This story is of those students and faculty of Southern who each have a unique tale of their own.

Judaism is a religion based on traditions and heritage. For thousands of years people who held to this belief, even though oppressed throughout time, still continued to be whole-heartedly devoted to their God. Jason Hare, sophomore Spanish major, was converted to this religion in 2004. Since his conversion, he has devotedly studied and researched the Torah.

Hare is a linguist fluent in several languages, two of those being Hebrew and Greek. Therefore he can study religious texts in its original form. He considers himself a reformed Jew, which is one who believes in one Supreme God and is awaiting the Messiah.

Unlike most Jews who believe there will be a messianic time period, Hare believes the Messiah, who is yet to come, will be a man.

He discussed the difference that can be made in this world by treating others with love, peace and kindness. As stated earlier, Judaism is heavily tradition based, with prayers that are recited daily and certain clothes are worn to signify one's time with God.

Although Hare does believe in God he doesn't believe there is a Satan or an evil

spirit. He stated that there is little or no evidence supporting Satan in the scripture. Jews believe that sin can be reconciled by asking forgiveness from God and making mends with whoever was involved. Hare described the philosophy in comparison to making a spelling mistake.

"If you make a spelling error then the teacher is going to come over and erase the mistake. Next time, you should know not to make the same mistake," Hare said.

He explains this simply because people should learn from their mistakes and not make them again. In regards to an after-life, Hare personally doesn't believe that one exists.

"Once you are dead your spirit doesn't keep on living," Hare said.

He describes God as being distant and disconnected from us.

"Many people believe God is two different ways... a loving, kind God who has emotions or a God who is omnipotent and powerful. They try to mix the two to make it work," he said.

The majority of reformed Jews believe that anything and everything essentially comes from God. Through prayer recitations, traditional clothing and a deeply rooted heritage Judaism is still alive and present throughout campus and the world. Different branches of Judaism and a different religion, such as Christianity, have come from Judaism.

Christianity is one of the fastest growing religions in the world. This religion

**"THE PROPHETS, BELIEVERS OF ISLAM,
AND THE GOOD DOERS ALL GO TO
HEAVEN. EVERYONE ELSE GOES DOWN."**

~ATAZZINE ZAITER



was started nearly 2,000 years ago when a group of men, called Jesus' disciples, started preaching Jesus as the Christ throughout the Roman Empire.

Today, it continues to spread through the remotest villages on the earth, but why? Who is this Jesus and why is this religion such a phenomena? Jon Smith is the director of the Baptist Student Union (BSU) at Southern. Smith has his Master's degree in Divinity and moved to Joplin last summer to take the position at the BSU.

Smith and his family are evangelical Christians. He personally became a Christian when he was in high school and was later baptized. The core of Christianity is the divinity of Jesus Christ.

Smith described the problem between humanity and God as humans are sinful by nature and people are therefore separated from God and His holiness. Jesus, through His death, became the bridge to communion with God, because evangelicals believe that He was fully God and fully man.

The teachings and history of this religion can be found in many translations of the Holy Bible. Christians also have many traditions that are practiced and one included is baptism. Depending on the denomination of Christianity a person can either be christened, sprinkled or immersed.

"The old life is gone and we are embracing a new life in Christ. Baptism is a public declaration of our faith," Smith said.

Another tradition that is accepted throughout the Christian church is the

taking of the communion, also called the Lord's Supper.

"As Southern Baptists, we believe that the Lord's Supper is to be taken seriously, and should be taken by believers in Jesus Christ on a regular basis," Smith said. "It is to remember the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ."

It is taught within Christianity that Heaven and Hell are both very real and a decision needs to be made on this earth as to where eternity will be spent and whether one will accept Christ as Lord.

"It's not about everyone else. You're the one that has to make that decision," he said. "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

According to the Christian beliefs, Jesus came to the earth and lived a perfect and sinless life.

"[He] lived up to the standard of the Law and died on the cross. His death was unnecessary. [He] had no purpose in dying personally. He did it on our behalf because He loved us," he said.

Smith believes that at some point Jesus is coming back. The time and hour is unknown he said, but it will be unmistakable. Christianity has no doubt had an effect on thousands of people and the teachings of Christ are familiar to many around the world. However, one religion that is fairly new to the Western world is Buddhism.

"Buddhism is not a religion, it's a philosophy," said Jim Kesinger, senior art major.

Kesinger was raised in the 1970s and during a particular wild LSD high he finally found what he believed to be the true

meaning of life. It was then he decided to start the quest of becoming a Buddha.

"There is no God or higher being, you can be as good as you want to be or you can be as bad as you want to be but whatever you do you're going to pay for it," he said.

He used the analogy of a pebble being thrown into a pond, the ripples go outwards and eventually they come back again. Buddhism starts with the internal dialogue within you, also called Karma. He described meditation as an important practice within the Buddhist beliefs.

"Meditate on your breathing and it enables you to shut down the internal dialogue and in doing so you start eliminating your karma formation," Kesinger said.

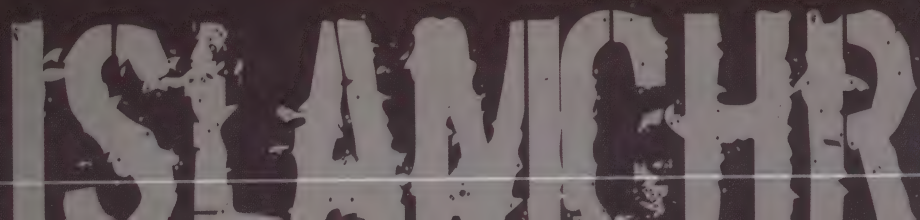
Kesinger said if someone starts focusing on one thing, which makes Karma, and that person focused with much intent then that thing will come back to them and they will get what they need out of it.

He believes that during meditation buddhists are not distracted by the outside world. Kesinger has been taught that there is no reconciliation of human error or sin.

"Once the stone is cast it's there, you don't pray for forgiveness," he said. "You get what you paid for."

Buddhists believe that after this life people are reincarnated into another being. It depends on their behavior in this world. However, the main goal of Buddhism is not to be reincarnated, but to move on to the next realm.

"The thoughts that are going on in your head right before you die will effect where your location is in the after-life," Kesinger said.





Buddhists believe that it's important to try to calm a person down before death so they can enter the next plane, whatever that entails. Buddha says that knowing what the afterlife entails is unnecessary, but it is known that it will be better than the earth that is inhabited now.

Kesinger said simply, Buddhists have very few traditions although they are not supposed to drink alcohol or take anything that will inhibit the mind. Buddhists believe that everything is transient and disconnection needs to be obtained because nothing in this world lasts forever.

"Life is like a slide show and it's going by quickly," Kesinger said.

The ultimate goal is to become a Buddha (perfect human) which means someone who has no flaws or bad thoughts. The Buddha philosophy is that of peace and love. It is believed that one chooses his or her own destiny by the life he or she lives today. This way of life dominates in most Asian countries.

Islam is the fastest growing religion on the face of the planet with 1.3 billion believers and the second largest religion behind Christianity. The Muslim people have faith in Allah and read the Qur'an faithfully.

Islam is an Arabic word which means "peace and submissiveness" when translated and the supporters of this faith are taught these very concepts.

Islam is a monotheistic religion, meaning they believe in one Supreme God. Muslims are completely faithful to Allah and his word. They have traced their roots back to the prophets, Abraham,

Moses, Noah, Jesus and the final prophet Muhammad.

Muhammad is said to be the perfect prophet to whom the Qur'an was revealed. Atazzine Zaiter, an Arabic professor on campus who is a devout Muslim, says Muhammad was illiterate but the word of Allah was still transcribed, which is proof that the Qur'an is truly the living word of Allah.

The foundation of their faith is put into the Almighty Allah, the Lord of the earth who is loving and compassionate. There are certain practices that the Muslim people observe. For example, Ramadan is a month in which fasting takes place.

"Ramadan is the month of revelation, remembering when Allah spoke to Muhammad," Zaiter said. "Therefore, we do not eat or drink from sunrise to sundown."

There are several other practices that are observed by the Muslim, like praying five times a day starting at sunrise and ending after dusk, fasting on other occasions and giving alms.

The latter is simply giving part of their income to the poor. Muslims also put much importance on traveling to Mecca, which, according to Zaiter, is literally the center of the earth, and participate in a pilgrimage.

"Mecca is the mother of towns," Zaiter said.

Although, the Qur'an is the word of Allah, there is another book that is revered by the Muslim population. It is called the Sunna and it is the words and acts of the prophet Muhammad. Zaiter believes that the Qur'an is where the answers can be

found for many questions people have about the world.

For example, according to the Qur'an the big bang theory is correct regarding the creation of the world. Muslims believe in the expanding cosmos that can be seen as the big bang theory. They also believe in an afterlife, heaven and hell.

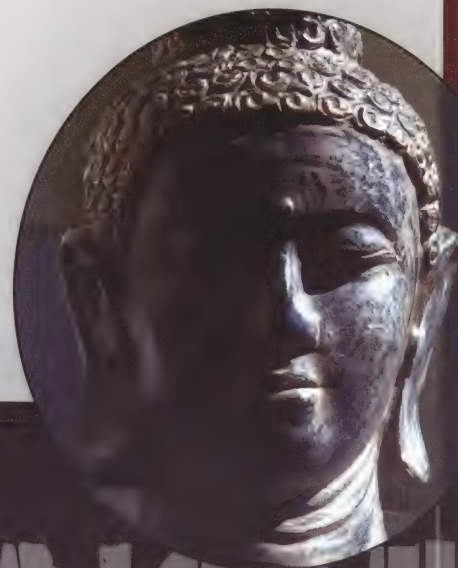
"The prophets, believers of Islam, and the good doers all go to heaven. Everyone else goes down," Zaiter said.

Muslims do believe people sin and therefore they must repent for the wrong doings and it must be honest. Forgiveness is a characteristic of Allah, however, repentance is necessary.

Muslims devout belief in the Supreme Allah has set them apart from other religions. They have many long standing customs that they believe someday will give them a place with Allah.

A clear and direct relationship with Allah will give a Muslim believer a pure and happy life. Self control and discipline is taught through this way of life and true human dignity will be realized.

On the campus of Southern there are many religions represented by the student body and faculty. These that were mentioned are only a fraction of beliefs. ||





Story by Noelle Ott



To be joyous is the meaning, continuing the tradition is the intent

The sound of the music dances through the air as the audience stands entranced. Some are dancing, some are tapping their toes up and down to the poly rhythm, but all are embracing a form of music that is new to them. The Kufara Marimba Ensemble is a Zimbabwe-influenced band that expresses itself through an instrument known as the marimba. The music it plays is known as Shona.

Kufara was founded in December of 1998 based on the dream of one woman - Kyla Jones. Jones had started playing the marimba in 1984.

"I became interested in the music after hearing it played in a busy downtown park in Seattle, Washington," Jones said.

At the time, Jones was a student at the University of Washington and a dance teacher. As a dance teacher, Jones said she struggled with the challenge of enabling her students to

find their own authentic movement, instead of one that was contrived.

"Amazingly, when I came upon this African marimba group in Seattle, what I witnessed was a huge group of people moving in ways that were obviously from themselves," Jones said. "I thought, 'This music is a fantastic dance teacher. I want to learn to play this music.'"

The curiosity that welled up inside of her drove her to take classes. Her first teacher was Dumi, who is considered the grandfather of Shona music in this country.

"He was a dynamic influence in my life and I am eternally grateful for having known him," Jones said. "Through him the joy of this music continued through me."

Jones found herself staying in the class for several years.

"There was both a simplicity and complexity about the music that I adored,"

Kufara



Submitted Photo

The current members of Kufara spend a great deal of time practicing their skills.

she said. "The altering of the basic patterns in the music, which happen in dialogue fashion while the music is being played, gives the music new life each time it's played."

Eventually she joined an ensemble in Seattle called Anzanga. However in 1993, she decided she needed to be close to her ninety-one-year-old mother. She made the move from the West coast to the land without a coast, Missouri.

At the same time Jones moved to Missouri, so did Dr. N. Ree Wells, associate professor of sociology for Missouri Southern. The two met when Jones was performing at an African art exhibit at George A. Spiva Center for the Arts. Jones was playing a mbira, which is described as a "thumb piano." A friendship grew from this and Wells ended up asking Jones if she would form an African dance class.

"Ree Wells was very persistent in following

up on when the class might start," Jones said. "That class went on two to three times a week for ten years until the studio which I taught in was sold and the class ended."

After guest artists played during the African semester at Southern, Jones couldn't help but realize what a favorable response the artists had from the general population.

"I thought maybe an African marimba band in Joplin might fly," Jones said.

She proceeded to ask her dance group if anyone would be interested in playing African music. When several said yes, she narrowed the possible candidates down and asked if they would like to play in a marimba band. Three people joined in her effort to make this music an option to the four-state area: Dr. Joy Dworkin, professor of English, John Whynhausen and Wells. Michael





Day, a person from outside the dance class, also joined.

Jones only had three marimbas when she came to Joplin, so she called an instrument maker from Seattle and asked that he pick out wood for the crafting of a baritone marimba and a bass marimba. Her friend, Stephen Golovnine, came to Joplin with the sound boards and they assembled the frames and tuned the resonators for the two instruments. And so, the group was formed.

The instruments the band plays with are comprised of numerous instruments. The largest of which is a bass marimba, which requires a bench to stand on. The second largest is a large baritone, which requires a lower bench. The group also has three sopranos and two tenors marimbas, drums and a shaker instrument called the "hosho," which means "heartbeat." They also use the mriba, an ancient instrument on which the marimba is based.

With the members learning and improving their skills on all the instruments listed above,

practice is a crucial part of their week.

"The group typically practice once a week, although, sometimes we've practices more and sometimes less than that," Dworkin said. "Practices are generally a couple hours, but sometimes longer."

The group usually meets on Sunday afternoons, but it usually practices more if a performance is on the horizon.

"It is quite a commitment," Wells said.

Wells said the commitment is what keeps someone from joining. However, no one has ever quit the group based on conflict within the group or because someone disliked the music itself.

"I'm in love with this music," Dworkin said.

The feelings for the music seem to be mutual between the members.

"We just love the music," Wells said. "It's intriguing because it's different. It pulls you in."

Jones sees why other people, besides the members, are drawn to the music as well.

KUFARA



Submitted Photo

There are many unusual instruments used by the group.



Courtesy of The Chart

The members of Kufara have changed over time.



"The truth is this music has it's own life," Jones said. "The music is very old. The spirit of the music is the charm of the music. It tends to touch people in a very deep way. It tends to connect people. That's part of what I love about it."

Another interest in the musical group are the costumes in which they wear. The costumes they have are either t-shirts that say "Kufara" or costumes made by Dr. Anne Jaros, associate professor of theatre. Jaros used cloth from Africa that a former member had donated after he returned from Tanzania.

The band has performed numerous times since they formed. Some performances have been for private groups; charity events such as Joplin's Cropwalk and the Springfield AIDS Walk; church groups; several local schools; United Way's "Success by Six" and the Dioko Coffee Company. However, Jones had one performance that stood out in her mind when the band played at Precious Moments in Carthage.

"I worked with eight girls from the Boys

and Girls Club, teaching them a traditional Shona dance called the water dance," Jones said. "The dance starts with all the girls entering the performance space dancing with pots of water on their heads. We had singing, dancing, music and an audience from all over the states and several other countries. It felt very special."

The group also performed at the International Zimbabwean music festival at Reed College in Portland, Oregon.

Both Wells and Dworkin said they couldn't pick a favorite performance, but they do have their preferences.

"My preference is to play out of doors where there's a fair amount of people who get drawn in," Wells said.

Jones also agreed to this.

Although they all enjoy playing, the set-up and break down for each performance is considered to be quite a workload.

"It's an enormous job to move [the instruments]," Wells said. "It takes a lot of energy to set-up and break down."





kufara

Wells said they have some very useful help. "We have a really wonderful group of friends and family to help us out," she said.

The group knows about 20 songs, with each song lasting five to seven minutes apiece. Some of the music is based on mbira music and is very old, with some people claiming it to be over a thousand years old. This type of music is called Nhema musasa and Taireva, which means, "building a temporary shelter" and "we used to tell you," respectively.

Over time the group has changed members. Currently the musical group includes Jones, Dworkin, Wells, Skip Tarrent, Will and Lisa

Perkins and Judith Wynhausen.

If anyone is interested in having Kufara perform for an event, they can contact Jones at Kufara@cableone.net, Dworkin at Dworkin-j@mssu.edu or Wells at Wells-r@mssu.edu. The group also has CD's for sell that can be found in Dworkin's office in Webster Hall, room 311A.

For those interested in mbira music, Southern will be hosting a Zimbabwean mbira player in September 2006.

Throughout the life of Kufara the members have found one thing to be constantly true, the meaning of Kufara, "to be joyous." ¶



"This is such a unique group. There's nothing like this in southwest Missouri."

-N. Reese Wells



Hauntings reveal variety of anomalies in the region

Cold winds and rainy nights are not necessary for some local ghost stories. The Joplin area has several hauntings to its name. Some of these are just a few minutes from the campus of Missouri Southern.

The Prosperity School Bed and Breakfast

The first of such hauntings comes from the grounds of Prosperity School Bed and Breakfast, which is around five minutes away, down Prosperity Road.

Richard and Jane Roberts are the owners of the bed and breakfast. The reports of hauntings came around a year after they took over the building in 2002.

"We've tried to find records on the building, but so far we've just been able to find, 'the class of miss so-and-so,'" Jane said.

The reports of the hauntings came from a local man who met the Roberts at Schlosky's.

"We started talking and he just told us, 'You know that place is haunted, right,'" Jane said.

The Roberts said they did not think about the incident until guests started asking them about noises in the rooms and someone sitting on the beds during the night. However, more information came in.

"Most of the local people, that's where the information comes from," Richard said.

The Roberts were not scared to be in

a haunted home. They live in the lower section of the bed and breakfast and had not met anyone who was scared of the occurrences until the local telephone book delivery man came. The man had his mother with him and wanted to meet the Roberts, who were new to the area. The mother refused to come in.

"We were new to this place and we wanted to show it off," Jane said. "She just was too scared to come in."

The Roberts learned more about the building from people who had relatives who knew the building. It was built in 1902 and was a school until 1962. Afterward, the building was abandoned for about 30 years, but was renovated in the mid 1990s and later sold to the Roberts.

When the Roberts took it over, they found graffiti on the basement walls, a hole burned in the floor of the back room, and other signs of vandalism. From the locals and visitors, the Roberts learned there was a rumor of a death during the years the building had been a school.

The origins of the death rumor are still not clear to them, but the stories range from a child dying and distraught teacher committing suicide to murder. However, the Roberts said they cannot prove any of the stories.

During the night, visitors most often report a tapping noise. The Roberts had not heard anything until one day when Jane was working alone upstairs.

"I heard something one day in broad

Story by Nate Billings

Ghostly Encounters

"We don't know the who, the what or why they are here."

- Richard Roberts

daylight," she said. "It sounded like someone walking up the stairs. It was the distinct sound of someone walking up the stairs."

Richard was downstairs in the living room. He was alone and saw no one walking up the stairs.

Other guests report feeling a presence on the stairway and items moving from place to place. There is also a few reports of a presence on the back patio.

The house also features the old school-house bell tower. A repairman came to the house with his son one day early in the building's history and needed to fix a few wires in the old tower. The son, who later visited the bed and breakfast, said his father came out of the building quickly and said he had encountered something in the tower.

The Roberts said the reports continue to come in as guests come to the building. There is a book available for guests to record their experiences, but the Roberts won't bring up the subject unless the guests bring it up first.

"Usually, they wait until the day they leave to bring it up," Jane said. "But, we don't want to scare anyone off."

A team of paranormal investigators came to the house in October of 2005 and brought a psychic with them. The psychic said she perceived the image of a small girl in 1920s garb walking the hallways.

The Roberts welcome anyone with information to contact them or to stop by and say hello.

"We don't know the who, the what or why they are here," Richard said.

The White House

The second haunted house in the nearby area is just outside of Webb City near the Joplin Airport. It is owned by the Webb City Mental Health and Rehabilitation Center. And, as the name denotes, it is a white house, inside and out.

The house used to be used as a home by the curator of the Elmhurst Hospital. Elmhurst was a sanitarium for tuberculosis patients from the 1920s to the 1960s.

The house is supposedly haunted by the ghost of Mary Alice Maggard.

"She was the mistress of the curator," said Liz Redick, administrator of the Rehabilitation Center.

Mary Alice, as the ghost is known, is not the only presence felt.

"Supposedly the curator's wife went crazy there," Redick said.

Redick said the presences are opposites. Mary Alice's is a sorrowful, but often comforting presence. The wife's is a negative presence.

Redick first learned about the hauntings when she took over her position in October of 2000.

"When I became curator, different people who were residents here told me stories about the place," Redick said.

The story, as Redick knows it, says Mary Alice committed suicide after her baby was born and died out of wedlock. The wife, having found out about the affair, may have also committed suicide.

Sometimes Redick has stayed in the building during bad weather with other workers. However, when Redick was alone, she would bring her rottweiler, Riggs.

"He's the one that would step out," she said. "All of a sudden, he would stand straight up and we would lock house."

Redick said she woke up one night after Riggs stood up and she saw an entity at the bottom of a stairwell in front of the downstairs bedroom. She said it was a woman with long blonde hair and a flowing white dress. When Redick got up, the woman disappeared.

"I still wonder if it was a dream or reality," she said.

Police officers train drug dogs at the property and use the inside of the White

"He used to appear and fade away. They called him the Buffalo Soldier."

- Steve Cottrell

House as a training facility.

In one room, known as the Evil Room, the dogs will stand up and refuse to enter. At the entrance to the attic, the dogs will stop, shiver and yelp.

Tunnels lead under the property from the buildings to the foundations of former incinerators. When a patient died, the body had to be carried underground to be burned because the virus was airborne.

Redick said the residents report seeing glowing spirits across the property and other workers see the same thing.

The property is privately owned by the hospital and visitors cannot enter without permission.

Other Local Ghosts

Other haunted places are in the spotlight of one local author, Steve Cottrell. Cottrell's specialty is Civil War history.

Among his research, he has found a few stories relating to the Civil War battles near the Joplin area.

One such battle is a guerilla battle north of the Peace Church Cemetery grounds. The cemetery is north of Joplin on Peace Church Road near the Joplin Waste Water Plant.

"There were 18 killed from both sides," Cottrell said. "For years the site had been reported to be haunted by early residents."

One early resident family of Joplin, the Snapp family, built on the land near the skirmish. A fire had burned down the home of the previous owners. Locals said the troops from the war had come back to burn it down.

"They snubbed superstitious legends," he said. "Their house went up in a mysterious fire one night just like the previous house."

Cottrell said another home on north Florida Street was built before the Civil War. The Rothenbarger Home still has bullet holes in it from the war.

Cottrell said one day in the 1980s during

a Civil War reenactment, several people in the reenactment decided to have a séance. Cottrell decided to stay in another room and rest.

"I heard a shattering noise come from the next room," he said. "I went in and looked. A glass antique lamp stood on the mantle beside the fireplace. A small piece of glass blew out of it."

Cottrell said others have seen ghostly vapors in the home.

There is another haunted area near Baxter Springs. It is the Fort Blair Park. Local residents reported an African American man walking the area in the vicinity of the old Fort.

"He used to appear and fade away," Cottrell said. "They called him the Buffalo Soldier."

The park was built a few years ago to commemorate Fort Blair and he said the soldier has since disappeared.

"His soul is put to rest with the monument that was put there," he said.

Farther from Joplin, but within an hours drive, is Newtonia, Missouri.

In Newtonia, the Ritchey House is known for being the oldest house around and for hauntings.

"In the 1960s, the Darch family lived there," Cottrell said. "One night, a storm blew over a tree on the tombstone of Polly Ritchey in the family cemetery."

The Darch's son cleaned up the tree the next day and cleared the grounds. That night, the weather became cold and the family members each had a wool blanket to wear.

"In the morning, everybody woke up shivering except the son," Cottrell said. "Everybody's quilt was on top of him. Polly made sure her grounds keeper was warm."

Every site mentioned in this story is on private property except for the Fort Blair Park. Permission must be obtained before entering. "I



Photo by Melissa Karsten

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